

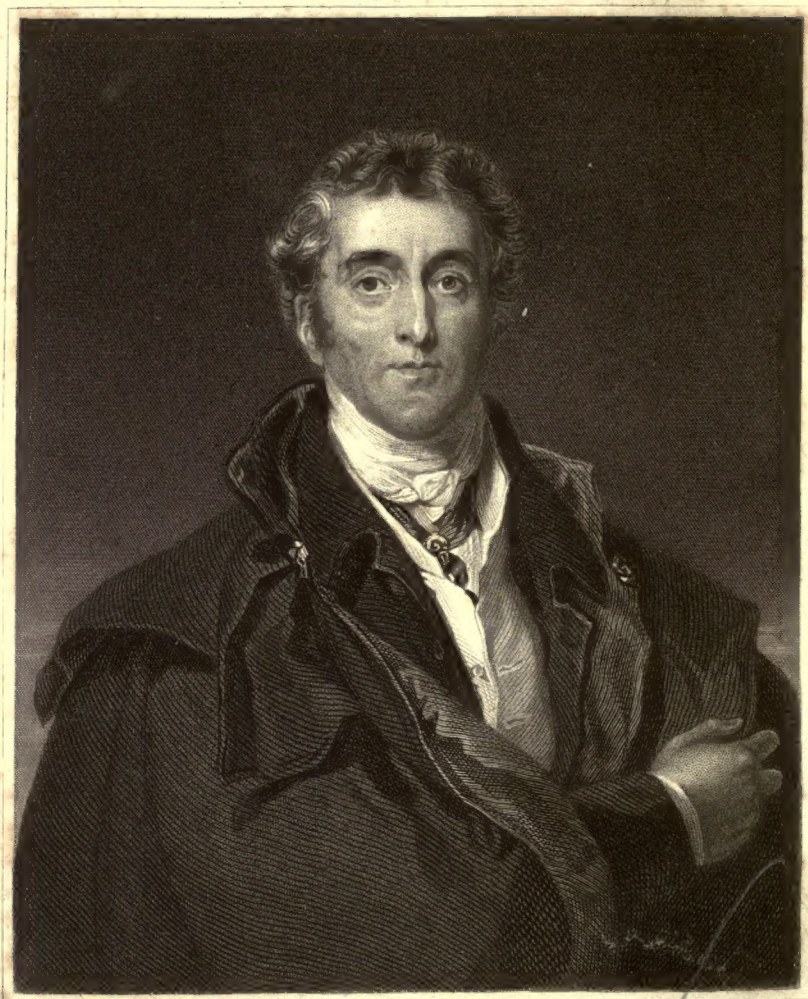


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WELLINGTON.

*From a Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.
in the possession of Sir R. Peel.*

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

DURING
THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE:
1816—1846.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT, 90, FLEET-STREET.

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PREFACE.

THE "History of the Thirty Years' Peace" was begun in 1846, and its issue in Numbers proceeded up to the end of the First Book. Then a suspension occurred, to Mr. Knight's great regret, in consequence of extensive changes in his commercial arrangements.

After an interval of a year, Mr. Knight invited me to take up the work, and carry it to a conclusion, on my own responsibility as regarded the authorship. It was gratifying to me to be invited to prosecute any work begun by him; and it was in itself a labour peculiarly tempting to me. The only reluctance I felt was from shame at the contrast which must immediately be evident between the remarkable beauty, as it appears to me, of the opening chapters, and the inferior quality of the following Books. As Mr. Knight was, however, really unable to resume, I joyfully agreed to work out his scheme. For the whole of the "History," after the First Book, I am thus solely responsible.

Yet, though left entirely free to do my work as I thought proper, there is one subject on which, from the circumstances of the case, I have not felt at liberty to speak;—Mr. Knight's own relation to the history of his time. One blessed result of the Peace has been the leisure and opportunity it has afforded for the cultivation of the popular intelligence: and in this mighty work, I suppose it will be admitted on every hand, that no one has done so much as he. Under any other circumstances of publication, a review of his benefactions to the nation would have been taken in the eleventh chapter of the Third Book, in connection with the notice of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It grieves me that such a statement should not appear in its proper place: and I do not see why I should not make some reference to the subject here, without his knowledge—though at some risk of his displeasure. I have mentioned in the text the leading publications of the Diffusion Society: and I may here explain that many of the most important and influential of them are owing to Mr. Knight.

Before he became connected with the Society, the plan was to issue the well-known Treatises on Scientific subjects. To his junction with the Association, to his inventive resource, his sagacity, his knowledge of the popular mind and its needs, and his most disinterested toil, we owe that long series of valuable works which forms a fine feature of the time;—The Penny Cyclopædia, The British Almanac and Companion, The Penny Magazine, and The Library of Entertaining Knowledge. The Journal of Education, and The Gallery of Portraits, were his undertakings. As for what more he has done, by his own resources, without aid from the organization of any Society, it is only necessary to refer to the book-shelves of all the homes in the land and its Colonies, where the dwellers can read, from the palace library to the cottage window. This reference is enough. It saves myself and my readers from the ingratitude of wholly overlooking one of the chief national blessings of the period of the Peace.

H. MARTINEAU.

AMBLESIDE,
January 31, 1849.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

DURING

THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE.

BOOK I.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF EUROPE TO THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE World was at Peace.

On the 20th of November, 1815, Viscount Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington, on the part of the King of Great Britain and Ireland, for himself and his allies; and the Duke of Richelieu, on the part of the King of France and Navarre, put their signatures to the definitive treaty between France and the Allied Powers. That treaty was for the "object of restoring between France and her neighbours those relations of reciprocal confidence and good will which the fatal effects of the Revolution and of the system of conquest had for so long a time disturbed." At the moment of signing this pledge of peace the Duke of Richelieu described it as "a fatal treaty." "More dead than alive," he writes on the 21st November, "I yesterday put my name to this fatal treaty." It was fatal in his view, because it contained "an arrangement framed to secure to the allies proper indemnities for the past, and solid guarantees for the future." To France alone did this treaty of the 20th November apply. The settlement of Europe, as it was called, had been effected by the general treaty signed in Congress at Vienna, on the 9th of June, 1815. Nothing remained but to carry out the great principles of justice and truth which were to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. Who could doubt that the reign of violence was destroyed for ever, when the Emperor Alexander of Russia proclaimed that henceforth the political relations of the powers of Europe were to be founded on the Gospel of peace and love? In a manifesto from St. Petersburg, dated "on the day of the birth of our Saviour, 25th December, 1815," the Emperor commanded that there should be read in all the churches a "convention concluded at Paris on the 26th of September, 1815, between the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia," in which "they solemnly declare that the present act has no other object than to publish in the face of the whole world their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and

PEACE OF PARIS,
Nov. 20, 1815.

Capetigue, Cent
Jours, vol. i.

HOLY ALLIANCE,
26th Sept., 1815.

in their political relations with every other government, to take for their sole guide the precepts of the holy religion of our Saviour, namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace, which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the councils of Princes, and guide all their steps, as being the only means of consolidating human institutions, and remedying their imperfections."

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient frauds shall fail,
Returning Justice lift aloft her scale,
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend."—POPE.

The declaration of "the Holy Alliance" (for so this convention of the 26th of September was named) was a rhodomontade which the Emperor Alexander amused himself by composing, with the assistance of a "white-robed Innocence" called Madame Krudener,* whilst the prosaic destinies of Europe were being settled amidst a conflict of jarring interests. The mystical doctrines of political perfectibility had few disciples, although the enthusiastic Emperor laboured unremittingly for converts. Metternich sily laughed, and handed it to his master to sign; Wellington coldly bowed, and said that the English Parliament would require something more precise. The Peace of Europe was settled, as every former peace had been settled, upon a struggle for what the respective powers thought most conducive to their own aggrandizement. We shall endeavour briefly to trace some of the circumstances of the final settlement of 1815. Time has revealed many of the hidden movements by which that settlement was accomplished.

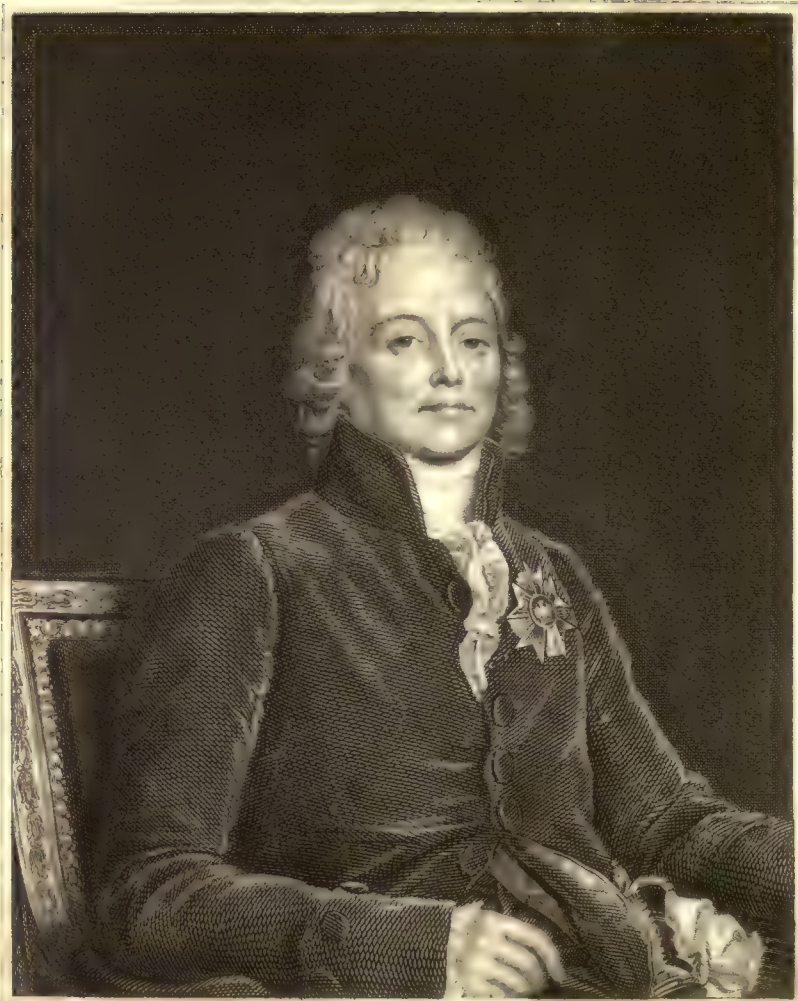
Capefigue, Re-
stauration.

TREATY OF CHAUMONT,
1st March, 1814.

The "Treaty of Union, Concert, and Subsidy," of the 1st March, 1814, known as the Treaty of Chaumont, was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, whilst the contest with France still remained undecided. The four great Powers were negotiating for peace with Bonaparte, whilst war was raging all around them. The Treaty of Chaumont declared that the four Powers had "transmitted to the French Government proposals for concluding a general peace;" and "should France refuse the conditions therein contained," that the object of this solemn engagement was "to draw closer the ties which unite them for the vigorous prosecution of a war undertaken for the salutary purpose of putting an end to the miseries of Europe, *by re-establishing a just balance of power.*" But this treaty was not limited to the attainment of peace alone;—it contemplated a long alliance for the preservation of what should be attained and established. Its second object was, "should the Almighty bless their pacific intentions, to fix the means of maintaining, against every attempt, the order of things which shall have been the happy consequence of their efforts." To this end the four Powers each agreed to keep in the field a hundred and fifty thousand effective men; Great Britain engaged to furnish a subsidy of five millions sterling for the service of the year 1814; and the duration of the treaty was to extend to twenty years. Within one month from the date of this treaty the counter-revolution of France was effected, and Napoleon was decreed to have forfeited the throne. On the 23rd of April a convention was agreed with the

* "Clothed always in white, kneeling in the whose wonderful words commanded the cler-
oratories, she seemed one of the Druidesses ments."—Capefigue, Restauration.





Engraved by J. M. W. T. S.

TALLEYRAND

Engraved by J. M. W. T. S. from a portrait by J. B. S. Ponceau.
Engraving by J. M. W. T. S.

restored Government for the suspension of hostilities ; of which the second article left no doubt that the just balance of power was to be established by reducing France to the territorial limits of the 1st January, 1792. By the definitive treaty of peace of the 30th May, 1814, some additions were made to these limits. With reference to the final disposal of the ceded territories acquired by France during the war, the treaty was necessarily vague. The larger questions of contemplated aggrandizement by Russia and Prussia were wholly left out of view : all was to be settled in the general Congress to be held at Vienna.

TREATY OF
PEACE, 30th May,
1814.

The Congress of Vienna was not only the most important assembly that modern Europe had beheld, but it was, at the same time, the most imposing and ostentatious. It was accompanied by all the "fierce vanities" of the last days of feudalism ; and the great dramatic poet's description of the splendours of "the vale of Andren" might, with little alteration, be applied to the saloons of Vienna in the latter months of 1814. In that city of pleasure were assembled, in October, the Sovereigns of Austria, and Russia, and Prussia, with many of the lesser Princes of the Germanic States. Emperors shook hands in the public streets ; Metternich and Castlereagh strolled about arm in arm. The royal negotiators vied with each other in the splendour of their entertainments ; the British minister, a commoner of England, o'ertopped the magnificence of the proudest royalties. The old Prince de Ligne exclaimed "Le Congrès danse, et ne marche pas." They did not move on quite so easily and agreeably as their outward delights and courtesies might seem to indicate. Talleyrand came with his profound adroitness to demand that France should take a part in all the deliberations. The parties to the Treaty of Chaumont would have narrowed his claims, but he persevered, and France regained her proper rank in European diplomacy. The ministers of England and Austria had begun to feel that ambitions might arise as adverse to the just balance of power as the humbled ambition of France itself. A voice had gone forth from the British Parliament to protest against the annexation of Saxony to Prussia, and the total subjugation of Poland by Russia. The Chancellor of the Exchequer declared on the 28th November, in the House of Commons, that he did not believe that any British minister would be a party to these acts. It was clear, from his own letters, that up to the end of October the British minister had been a consenting party to the annexation of Saxony ; and that he had defended the annexation upon the ground that the King had been guilty of perpetual tergiversations, and ought to be sacrificed to the future tranquillity of Europe. Of the wishes and interests of the people of Saxony he made no mention. Austria, on the other hand, strongly protested against the annexation. For three months Europe was on the brink of a new war. France, having recovered a position of independence at the Congress, demanded the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne of Sicily and Naples, and refused to consent to the degradation of the King of Saxony. The principle of legitimacy was violated, according to Talleyrand, by both these acts. Austria made common cause with France in the discussions upon Saxony. Opposed to these powers were the Sovereigns of Russia and Prussia, united by personal friendship, and most potential in their military organization. "Secure me Saxony," said Prussia, "and you shall have Poland ;" "Secure me Poland," said Russia, "and you shall have Saxony." In these questions Great Britain had no direct interest ; but she

CONGRESS OF
VIENNA, October,
1814.

Hansard, No-
vember 28, 1814.

had the great national interest to uphold, that the weaker states should not be absorbed by the stronger, and that some regard to the people should be shown in those partitions of territory which the wars of a quarter of a century had rendered too familiar. There was a change in the policy of the British minister at Congress. Before the end of 1814 England, France, and Austria were united in demanding the integrity of Saxony, and the independence of Poland. On the 11th of December the Archduke Constantine, who had hurried from Vienna, called upon the Poles to rally round the protection of the Emperor of Russia; the Prussian minister declared that Saxony was conquered by Prussia, and should not be restored; Alexander, in revenge for the opposition of France, was resolved to support Murat on the throne of Naples. The rival powers began to look to war. There had been a million of allied men in arms to resist the aggressions of France, and to restore the just equilibrium of power in Europe. That these arms were now to be turned against each other was a more than possible event; it was an event to be instantly provided for and regulated by those whose mission was that of peace. In the treaty of Holy Alliance the rulers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia had solemnly engaged to "remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow-countrymen, they will, on all occasions and in all places, lend each other aid and assistance." In a secret treaty concluded between Austria, England, and France, on the 3rd February, 1815, an engagement was entered into to act in concert, each with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, to carry into effect the Treaty of Paris, in the manner most conformable to the spirit of that treaty, "convinced that the powers who had to complete the dispositions of the Treaty of Paris ought to be maintained in a state of security and perfect independence, and holding it necessary, *in consequence of pretensions recently manifested*, to look to the means to resist every aggression." When, a year after the date of this treaty, Mr. Brougham moved in the House of Commons for a copy of the document, Lord Castlereagh resisted its production on the ground that it might be considered in the nature of an unfinished transaction, "a mere historical fact," that could have no influence on our actual affairs. He contended that the cordial co-operation of the Allies in the events of 1815 was sufficient to show that for all great purposes the spirit of strict alliance pervaded the powers of Europe. Thirty years have passed since this argument was employed. It was a good argument then to prevent inconvenient disclosures; but there requires little to convince us now, upon the clear evidence of this "historical fact," that if Bonaparte had not leaped into the throne of the Tuileries in the spring of 1815, the peace of Europe might have been broken before it was consolidated. The "historical fact" is not without its lessons even at the present hour. On the 7th of March Prince Metternich received a despatch announcing the hasty and mysterious departure of Napoleon from Elba. On the 13th the solemn declaration of Congress was published, that Bonaparte was to be put down as the common enemy of mankind. The Congress of Vienna continued its deliberations; and whilst preparations for war were made on every side, the general treaty of Congress for the settlement of Europe was prepared, and was signed only a week before the battle of Quatre Bras. The points of difference as to territorial limits were settled by mutual concessions. The principle of partition and readjustment of territory was established.

SECRET TREATY,
3rd Feb. 1815.

Capefigue, Re-
stauration.

The definitive treaty of the Congress of Vienna was signed on the 9th of June. On the 14th the Chancellor of the Exchequer went down to the House of Commons, and said that he had contracted a loan that day for thirty-six millions, and he asked for a total amount for the supplies of the year, in addition to the permanent charges of thirty-seven millions and a half, of no less a sum than ninety millions. The Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were agreed to, with only one opposing speech, and without a division. On the 18th the battle of Waterloo was fought. On the 3rd of July Paris was in the occupation of the Anglo-Prussian army—Louis XVIII. was restored—Napoleon was banished to St. Helena.

TREATY OF CONGRESS, 9th June, 1815.

It is not within our province to trace the various political intrigues that followed the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne from which they had been hurled, partly by their own indiscretions, essentially by the re-action of that fierce military spirit which had held Europe in terror for a quarter of a century. There was once more to be a contest for power between England and Russia. England could repress the national hatred of Prussia, and preserve Paris from worse than useless outrage. She could even read France "a great moral lesson" in the restoration of the works of art to their lawful owners. But England could not preserve the influence which would have secured France from the dangerous revenge of the ultra-royalists. Talleyrand, who had raised his country to the position which she occupied at the Congress of Vienna, was driven from the councils of that King who, a few months before, was a powerless outcast. Russia, it is said, named his successor. The ministers of England did all that remained to them to do. The treaty of alliance, which accompanied the Treaty of Paris, was forwarded to the French minister with a note which contained sundry excellent lessons on the duty of uniting moderation with firmness, and rejecting imprudent or impassioned counsels. "Indemnities for the past" were to be secured by France paying, by gradual instalments, seven hundred millions of francs—a sum not equal to the loan which the English Chancellor of the Exchequer raised in one day; "guarantees for the future" were exacted by the presence of the army of occupation for a term of years, supported at the expense of France, and garrisoning her strong places, under the command of the Duke of Wellington. England, having lost her real influence in the government of France, retained the power of making herself odious. The terms granted to the French were in truth moderate. England, at the height of glory, had to pay penalties of longer duration, perhaps of greater severity, as the price of this tremendous conflict. The last three years of war alone had cost the country one hundred and ninety-seven millions.

Paris in the autumn of 1815 presented a scene even more remarkable than the Vienna of the preceding year. The conquered city was one universal theatre of gaiety and excitement. Here was no "Rachel weeping for her children." In some dark estaminet might a solitary soldier of the disbanded army of the Loire be heard execrating the presence of the foreigner. But the foreigner preserved an exact discipline. He paid for everything, and he had ample means of payment. "It is from this year, 1815, that the greater part of the shopkeeping fortunes of Paris are to be dated." The haughty nobles of Russia lavished their rents upon Parisian mistresses and gamblers. Hundreds of the great English families rushed to Paris to gaze upon the conquering

PARIS IN THE AUTUMN OF 1815.

Capefigue, Restauration.

armies, and to contend for the honour of a smile from Lady Castlereagh in her evening circle, or a bow from the great Duke at his morning levee. All this was to end. The Ministers and serf-lords of Russia had to return to a St. Petersburg winter, and see how best they could persuade the Poles that their annexation was the triumph of their independence. The cautious diplomatists of Austria had to discover how the hot Italian spirits that had dreamt of liberty and national greatness were to sit down under the leaden sceptre of the German stranger. Prussian Counsellors of State had to meet the excited Landwehr, who had rushed to arms under the promise of constitutional liberty; and to accommodate the differences of one set of subjects with the old German laws, and her new Rhine people with the French code. The smaller German states had to re-arrange themselves under the Confederation. Sweden had to reconcile Norway. Holland had to amalgamate with Belgium—Protestant with Catholic, and interpret Dutch laws to a French race. Spain, which had put down the Cortes, had to try if proscriptions could satisfy a people that had been fighting seven years in the name of freedom. Certainly these home prospects were not so agreeable to the managers of national affairs as the reviews of the Bois de Boulogne, or the réunions of the Faubourg St. Honoré. Perhaps to the English ministers, and to their admiring followers, there was less of apprehension than to the leaders of those states who had gained something more solid than the glory with which England remained contented. It was enough for her to believe that she had won security. She had proudly won the semblance of it; the one great enemy was overthrown. Still there might be some feeling—half fear, half disgust—at the thought of the House of Commons, with its searching questions, its hatred of continental alliances, its denunciations of broken promises, coming from a small but active minority. The lofty port and the cold politeness that befitted the table of Congress would be there out of place. Two years of negotiation in the midst of victory would not be favourable to debating equanimity. Hard every-day business would have to be talked of instead of glory. There was but one course:—

“They must either
 (For so run the conditions) leave those remnants
 Of fool, and feather, that they got in France,
 With all their honourable points of ignorance,
 And understand again like honest men,
 Or pack to their old playfellows.”—SHAKSPERE:—*Henry VIII.*

But if the plenipotentiaries of this country might return home a little imbued with the temper of despotic cabinets—if they could be accused of having too strenuously asserted the principle of legitimacy—if they had appeared to have contended too much for the claims of kings, and too little for the rights of the people—in one respect they had done their duty, and truly upheld the moral supremacy of England. They had laboured strenuously, and they had laboured with tolerable success, for the abolition of the Slave Trade. In the Treaty of Utrecht, England protected her commercial interests—despicable protection!—by stipulating for a monopoly of the slave trade for thirty years. In the Treaty of Paris, England wrested from France an immediate abolition of the traffic, and a declaration from all the high contracting powers that they would concert, without loss of time, “the most effectual measures for the entire and definitive

abolition of a commerce so odious." This was something to set off against the remarkable fact that Great Britain, who had made such enormous sacrifices for the deliverance of Europe, had not a single commercial treaty to exhibit as a compensation for her prodigal disbursements of loans and subsidies. During the most stringent period of Napoleon's anti-commercial decrees, her commerce went on increasing. The people of Europe *would* have her commodities, and no fiscal power could shut them out. The merchants and manufacturers of England might expect that when all the rulers of Europe were assembled to deliberate upon the future welfare of the great European family, there would be some relaxation of that almost universal system of high duties and prohibition which denied to the continental nations the advantages of free marts for the products of British industry. The days of neutrals and licences and armies of smugglers were gone. Our diplomatists came home with no treaties putting their country "upon the footing of the most favoured nations." The merchants and manufacturers would not have welcomed them if they had come with any treaty that went upon the principle of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. Even the Treaty of Versailles, which Pitt negotiated with France in 1786, would have been offensive to the Parliament of England in 1816, for it was a treaty of mutual concession and liberality. Had Lord Castlereagh said to the House of Commons, "I have made trade free," he would have been hooted. The shipowners would have clamoured for their beloved navigation-laws. The landowners would have driven him from office had he admitted the corn of Poland and the wool of Saxony. The colonial merchants would have impeached him for letting in the timber of Norway. The manufacturers would have been in open insurrection at the faintest rustling of the silks of France. As it was, the Peace of 1815 was constructed without the slightest effort to secure its perpetuity by something stronger than conventions and protocols—by uniting mankind in a bond of common interests.

PEACE CON-
CLUDED WITHOUT
ANY COMMERCIAL
TREATIES.

Macgregor's Com-
mercial Statistics,
vol. i. p. 3.

We request our readers to turn to the map of Europe, and to follow us in a few details which may save some after-trouble of reference and explanation.

Look, first, at the *kingdom* of France, as its limits were fixed in 1815, nearly the limits of 1790—the limits of the present hour. It is a noble territory, full of natural resources;—a land that possesses all the elements of real prosperity—a country that must ever be one of the greatest powers of Europe—a military power, a naval power. The population of France within the limits fixed by the peace, was in 1815 about thirty millions. But before the campaign of 1812 the *empire* of France embraced a population of more than fifty millions; the Imperial domination extended over more than sixty millions. There were thirty-two millions of people in 1815 to come under new laws and new governments:

TERRITORIAL
LIMITS, AS SET-
TLED BY THE
PEACE.
FRANCE.

The old provinces of the Low Countries severed from the empire, were raised up into the kingdom of the Netherlands under the House of Orange. The line which now separates Belgium and Holland was drawn after the Revolution of 1830. In 1815 this was made a compact kingdom of five millions of inhabitants—an agricultural, a manufacturing, and a commercial kingdom, with noble colonies. The physical arrangement of such a state was admirable. But the moral overcame the material. The people would not amalgamate.

KINGDOM OF THE
NETHERLANDS.

The Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), with all that part of Germany which

PRUSSIA.

lies on the left bank of the Rhine, were added to the old territory of France in 1801. The Rhenish provinces were, in 1815, bestowed upon Prussia—a fertile territory, an industrious people. By the peace of Tilsit Prussia was stripped of nearly one half of her dominions. The Congress of Vienna restored her to her full sovereignty. But the Congress did more for this great member of the European confederacy. It gave Prussia one half of Saxony. It gave her a slice of the Duchy of Warsaw, with a million of people. The map will show better than words what the peace of 1815 did for Prussia. It raised her from the depths of her humiliation after the battle of Jena, to take rank amongst the most important of European powers.

RUSSIA.

A territory larger than all Europe put together—a population forming one-fifth of the whole of Europe—this is indeed a mighty country, and one that would seem destined for universal monarchy. But the largest states are not always the strongest. Russia, by its ascendancy at the Congress of Vienna, obtained the kingdom of Poland in undisputed sovereignty, with four million inhabitants. The Duchy of Warsaw was swept from the domination of France. The new kingdom had a Constitution; but the old annexations of Poland to Russia were to continue under the absolute monarch. The fabric was too frail to endure.

AUSTRIA AND
SARDINIA, &c.

Where vanished the French kingdom of Italy, with its six million inhabitants? Where all the lesser French-incorporated states, Piedmont, Genoa, Tuscany, Lucca? The lord of the iron crown might indeed dream that the Mediterranean would become the French lake! Austria acquired the Lombardo-Veneto kingdom, with its four million of inhabitants. Sardinia annexed Genoa to its territory, and became a more important state. The States of the Church were re-established. Naples and Sicily were restored to the old Bourbon branch. Tuscany was again a Grand Duchy. Smaller States are dotted about the famed Italian land. Visions of ancient grandeur have sometimes precipitated its people into revolt; but the arrangements of 1815 have not been disturbed. Austria obtained as great a prize in the dismemberment of the French empire as Prussia and Russia. With a policy that was undoubtedly the result of the most skilful calculation, she sought no very considerable enlargement of territory to the north. She became mistress of the Adriatic, and carried her frontier to the Alps.

GERMANIC CON-
FEDERATION.

It is scarcely necessary for us to follow the minute territorial arrangements of the minor German States. The Germanic Confederation will require to be noticed when we have to trace its internal workings. It was not the least of the achievements of the Congress of Vienna, that the contending interests of a host of petty princes were harmonized into some semblance of nationality. One Germany to be defended by the confederation of independent States, raised up a formidable barrier to external ambition, whether of France or of Russia.

DENMARK, SWE-
DEN, AND NOR-
WAY.

The last important territorial decision which it may be necessary to point out, is that of the annexation of Norway to Sweden. This was in accordance with the convention of Kiel, in 1814, between Denmark and Sweden.

GENERAL RE-
SULTS OF THE
PEACE.

We are now writing of the settlement of Europe exactly thirty years since the final act of that settlement, the Peace of Paris of November, 1815. From that time there has been no general war in Europe. Spain has passed through revolution upon revolution; the South American colonies have acquired

independence without strength ; Italy has in vain striven against the rule of Austria and Sardinia ; Poland has succumbed more entirely to the power of Russia ; Greece has been raised into a kingdom ; the younger branch of the House of Bourbon has obtained the throne of France, as was contemplated by some in 1815 ; Belgium has been severed from Holland. Yet with all these changes the five great Powers have not drawn the sword from the scabbard to assault each other : this is not to be forgotten in estimating the value of the peace of 1815. Napoleon, at St. Helena, said to O'Meara, "So silly a treaty as that made by your ministers for their own country was never known before. You give up everything and gain nothing." We can now answer, that we gained everything when we gained thirty years of repose. We gained everything when, after twenty years of warfare upon the most extravagant scale, the spirit of the people conducted that warfare to a triumphant end. The gains of a great nation are not to be reckoned only by its territorial acquisitions, or its diplomatic influence. The war which England had waged, often single-handed, against a colossal tyranny, raised her to an eminence which amply compensated for the mistakes of her negotiators. It was something that they did not close the war in a huckstering spirit—that they did not squabble for this colony or that *entrepôt*. The fact of our greatness was not to be mistaken when we left to others the scramble for aggrandizement, content at last to be free to pursue our own course of consolidating our power by the arts of peace. There were years of exhaustion and discontent to follow those years of perilous conflict and final triumph. But security was won ; we were safe from the giant aggressor. The people that had subdued Napoleon—for it was the act of the people—would do the work that remained to them.

1816.

STATE OF PARTIES.

The Imperial Parliament had continued prorogued from the 11th July, 1815, to the 1st February, 1816. During this long and unusual interval of legislative business—for it had been the previous custom for Parliament to meet early in November—the foreign policy of the administration had been carried out without the slightest control from the representatives of the people. Sir S. Romilly writes in his diary of the 1st February, "There has been no period of our history in which more important events have passed, and upon which the counsels of Parliament (if they be of any utility) were more to be required, than during this long prorogation." It may be doubted if the counsels of Parliament could have been "of any utility" in deciding the great questions involved in the irresistible triumph of the allied armies. Romilly was himself at Paris in October, 1815. He laments over the unpopularity of the English in compelling the removal of the works of art from the Louvre ; he doubts whether a peace of long duration could arise out of the occupation of France by foreign troops ; he sympathizes with those who bitterly complain of the perfidy of the allied Powers. Mr. Horner has similar views : the good fruits of the French Revolution were to be lost to France ; the confederacy of courts and the alliance of armies were to subject the French to the government of a family that they despise and detest : that the people are the property of certain royal families was to be established as a maxim in the system of Europe ; our army was degraded in being the main instrument of a warfare against freedom and civilization. If Parliament had been sitting in the autumn of 1815, and had these been the general opinions of

Romilly's Diary, vol. iii., p. 213.

Id., p. 210.

Horner's Correspondence, vol. ii., p. 273.

1816.

Horner's Correspondence, vol. iii., p. 291.

Lord Dudley's Letters, p. 145.

Ed. Review, October, 1815.

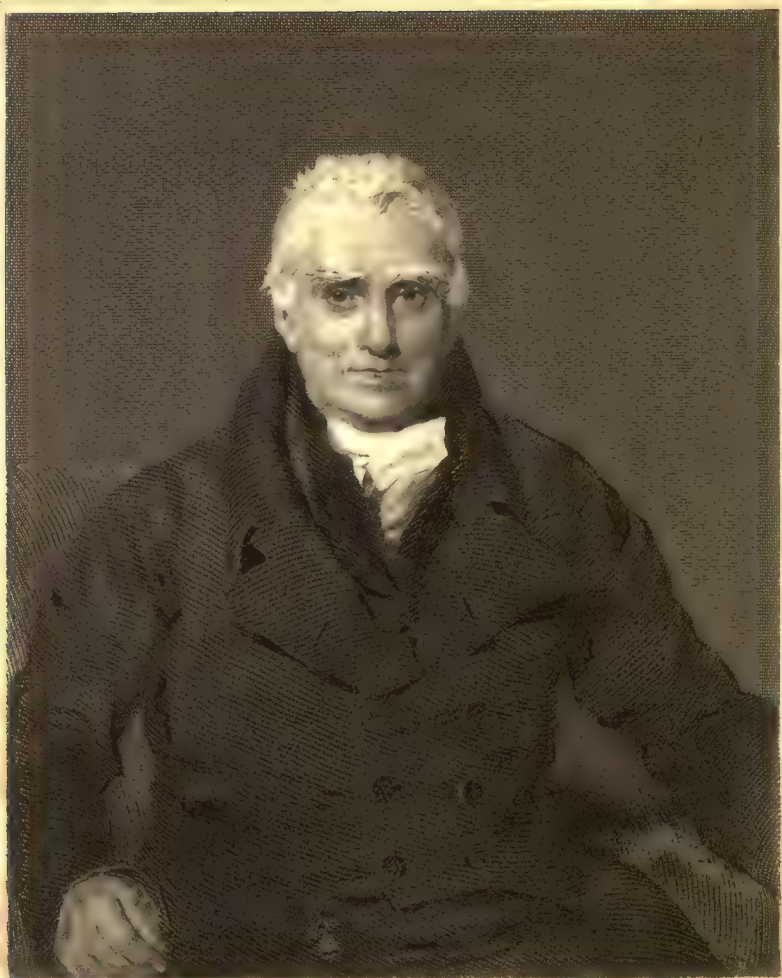
Lord Dudley's Letters, p. 136.

PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS.

the Opposition as a body, the Bourbons might not have been supported by the English diplomatists in their restoration; and the English army might have been withdrawn from the occupation of France, after the object had been accomplished for which England had professed to arm—the overthrow of Napoleon. But Parliament was not sitting in the autumn of 1815; and, what is more important, the Opposition, as a body, did not hold these opinions. Two days before the meeting of Parliament Mr. Horner writes, “I fear we are not likely to go on very harmoniously in opposition; there are such wide and irreconcilable differences of opinion between those who, on the one hand, will hear of nothing but a return to all that was undone by the French Revolution, and who, *in the present moment of success*, declare views of that sort which they never avowed to the same extent before,—and those who, on the other hand, think that the French people have some right to make and mend their government for themselves. * * * You may expect very soon to see a breach in the Opposition; I think it cannot be averted much longer.” Mr. Ward (afterwards Lord Dudley) attributes to the Opposition motives which could belong only to a few, and which even in those few were mixed up with something higher: “Opposition had staked everything upon Napoleon’s success, and are grieved at his failure.” Had Napoleon succeeded, there might have been unity. He fell; and the great Whig party was broken for a season. It only recovered its power when it took deeper root in the popular affections. The triumph of the British arms was soon followed by grievous embarrassments at home. But the people, at the commencement of 1816, had little sympathy for those who were lamenting over the banishment of Napoleon. Even the chief Whig organ, the *Edinburgh Review*, complained of “the strange partiality which has lately indicated itself for him among some of those who profess to be lovers of liberty in this country,”—and ridiculed “the sort of hankering after him which we can trace among some of our good Whigs.” The people had as little respect for those who grieved that France had to pay severe penalties for her long career of spoliation. The success of England was too recent—the success was too splendid and overwhelming—not to throw its shield over just fears and reasonable complaints. It annihilated mere party hostility. The re-action was not yet come. The fever-fit of triumph had not yet been followed by the cold torpor of exhaustion. For a little while the nation could bear even the presumption of those who claimed all the merit of the triumph, and almost appeared to forget that never was a government so supported by the people as the English supported their government during the Hundred Days. Mr. Ward, a general follower of the administration, writes thus of the men in power in 1816: “Their prodigious success—which, without at all meaning to deny their merits and abilities, must be allowed by all reasonable men to have been vastly beyond their merits and beyond their abilities—had made their underlings insolent, and the House too obedient.” Such was the position of the two parties with reference to external politics. Domestic concerns, which were soon to assume the greater importance, were too little regarded during the war to divide men into parties. The policy of peace had slowly to construct the great modern division of the adherents to things as they were, and the advocates of things as they should be—the enemies and the friends of progress.

Let us endeavour, with however feeble a pencil, to trace the outlines of those who had chiefly to interpret the opinions of their time—to attack and to defend—





LORD ELDON

Painted by Sir P. Foulton

to propound lasting truths or fleeting paradoxes—in the Parliament of 1816. The greater number of those who had to debate on the Peace of Paris sleep with those who had to debate on the Peace of Utrecht. The same narrow house that contained Oxford and Bolingbroke contains Liverpool and Castlereagh. Ponsonby and Tierney are as insensible to the historic regards of their younger contemporaries as are Stanhope and Hammer. The living and the dead alike claim an honest and impartial estimation.

On the woolsack sits John Scott, Lord Eldon. The Chancellor is in his 65th year. He has filled his high office, with the exception of a single year of absence from power, since 1801. The consummate judge is in him united with the narrowest politician. The acute lawyer, balancing every question with the most inflexible honesty and the clearest vision, is the most one-sided and halting statesman that ever sat in the councils of an empire in which truth was only to be established by conflict, and every element of change was in ceaseless, and for the most part healthful activity. His thought by day, his dream by night, is to uphold what he calls the Constitution—that indefinable compound of principles and expedients, that to him is as sacred as the commands of Holy Writ. Whoever approaches to lay his hands on that ark, whether he come to blot out a cruel statute, or to mitigate a commercial restriction, or to disfranchise a corrupt borough, or to break down a religious disability, is his enemy. He was the last great man who belonged to this sect. But he acted with perfect honesty and unshrinking courage in the assertion of these opinions. He retained office because he professed the opinions; but no one can believe that he professed the opinions to retain office. He lived in times when bursts of popular violence alarmed the peaceful, and licentious expressions of opinion disgusted the moderate; and he knew no other instrument but force for producing internal peace. Yet he was no hater of liberty, no assertor of the rights of unconditional power. The law, as it stood, was his palladium, yet no one was more ready to make the natural course of justice give place to suspensions of the constitution. But in his mind this was to preserve the constitution. To lop off a limb was life to the constitution; to infuse new blood was death. It has been truly observed that he confounded every abuse that surrounded the throne, or grew up within the precincts of the altar, with the institutions themselves—"alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse." He is one that after-times will not venerate; but, fortunately for the fame of the larger number of the great ones of the earth, there is a vast neutral ground between veneration and contempt.

The first Lord of the Treasury is the Earl of Liverpool. He has been Prime Minister from 1812; he has held high office from the beginning of the century; he has filled subordinate offices from the age of manhood. Respect is on all hands conceded to him—the respect due to honest intentions and moderate abilities. Admiration or disgust are reserved for his colleagues. As Prime Minister of England he seems to fill something like the station which a quiet and prudent king may fill in other countries. He is the head of the nation's councils, with responsible ministers. The conduct of the war was not his; he suffered others to starve the war. The peace was not his; he gave to others the uncontrolled power of prescribing the laws of victory. The stupendous financial arrangements of the war were not his; they were expounded by a man of business in the House of

1816.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

Brougham's
Statesmen,
Series II.LORD LIVERPOOL
AND HIS COL-
LEAGUES IN THE
HOUSE OF LORDS.

1816.

Commons. The resistance to all change was not his ; the great breakwater of the coming wave was his sturdy Chancellor. The people, during his war-administration, had quietly surrendered itself to the belief that good business talents were the most essential to the official conduct of the affairs of nations. A long course of victory had succeeded to a long course of disaster ; and therefore the rulers at home were the best of rulers. The great Captain who saved his country, and threw his protection over the Government, offered the strongest evidence, in after years, of how little that Government had done for him. Around the Premier sit the Home Secretary, Viscount Sidmouth, and the Colonial Secretary, the Earl Bathurst. They enjoy, even in a greater degree than himself, the privilege of not being envied and feared for the force of their characters, or the splendour of their talents.

THE OPPOSITION
IN THE HOUSE OF
LORDS.

It is not quite easy to understand now what constituted the Opposition in 1816. The two Peers of the greatest mark had been divided in their opinions as to the war against Napoleon on his return from Elba. It is little doubtful that they were equally divided as to the character of the peace. Earl Grey stood at the head of the party that denounced the intimate foreign alliances which this country had formed in the support of legitimacy. He would have treated with Bonaparte. Lord Grenville held that the maintenance of peace with Bonaparte was impossible, and that consequently the foreign alliances and the restoration of the Bourbons were essential parts of the war policy. Both had been driven from office ten years before, through their firm adherence to the support of the Catholic claims. The natures of each of these eminent statesmen were somewhat haughty and uncompromising. Had they remained in power after the death of Mr. Fox, they would have probably differed as to the conduct of the war. Had they succeeded to power upon the termination of the war, they would as certainly have differed as to the character of popular discontents and the mode of appeasing them. Lord Grey was a Whig-Reformer—Lord Grenville a Whig-Conservative. On the benches of Opposition sate also the Marquis of Lansdowne and Lord Holland. Their differences of opinion were not of a very practical character. Lord Lansdowne saw in the overthrow of Napoleon the destruction of a military tyrant, and he rejoiced accordingly—Lord Holland, a man of large benevolence, had a generous tear for a fallen foe.

HOUSE OF COM-
MONS.

LORD CASTLE-
REAGH AND HIS
COLLEAGUES.

Turn we to the House of Commons—that assembly whose voice, even when its defects were most fiercely canvassed, went forth throughout the world as the expression of a great and free nation. The leader of the ministerial phalanx is Robert Stewart, Lord Castlereagh. To his splendid figure and commanding face, he has added the outward show of honours which have not been bestowed upon a commoner since the days of Sir Robert Walpole. He is “the noble lord in the blue ribbon.” He has been Foreign Secretary since 1812. He held high office in 1802. By the force of his character he bore down the calumnies which had attached to his connexion with the Government of Ireland before the Union. The triumphs of the Peninsula had obliterated the recollections of Walcheren. He comes now to Parliament at the very summit of his power, having taken but little part in its debates during the mighty events of the two previous years. There is a general impression that he has a leaning towards arbitrary principles, and that his intercourse with the irresponsible rulers of the Continent has not increased his aptitude for administering a representative

government. He will be attacked with bitterness ; he will be suspected, perhaps unjustly. But he will stand up against all attack with unflinching courage, and unyielding self-support. No consciousness of the narrowness of his intellect and the defects of his education will prevent him pouring out torrent after torrent of unformed sentences and disjointed argument. It is a singular consideration that mere hardihood and insensibility should have stood up so successfully against untiring eloquence within the walls of Parliament, and determined hostility without. Lord Castlereagh even succeeded in living down popular hatred. Round this most fortunate minister of 1816 are grouped his colleagues—Nicholas Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, “the noblest work of God,” according to Pope’s maxim ; the Secretary of War, Lord Palmerston ; the chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Peel ; and, somewhat out of his place, the friend whom Canning raised to office when he ingloriously went to Lisbon in 1814—Mr. Huskisson.

The accredited leader of the Opposition is George Ponsonby, formerly Chancellor of Ireland. He is a prudent and temperate leader, not remarkable for great powers as a debater, but a safe guide for party men to rally round. One who did not act with him says, “He was the least eminent man that ever filled such a station.” One who did act with him writes in his diary, “He was a very honest man, had many excellent qualities, and possessed very considerable talents ; but he was by no means fit for the situation which he has for ten years occupied—that of leader of the party of Opposition.” Beside him sits George Tierney, a Parliamentary veteran, who has been fighting for twenty years, chiefly in the ranks of Opposition, once as a member of the Addington administration—a financier, a wit. Of ready powers as a debater, of great practical sense, of unblemished private character, he seemed fitted for higher eminence than he attained in the nation’s eyes. He was a parliamentary man of business at a time when that high quality was not valued as it ought to have been ; and, whether in or out of office, the best committee man, the clearest calculator, was held as a very subordinate person in affairs of legislation. He redeemed, however, the character of the Opposition in regard to this quality, in which they were held, unjustly enough, to be singularly deficient ; and he almost succeeded in persuading his hearers and the public, that genius and industry may be united. The nation seemed then to have confidence in its Administration, because it regarded its chiefs and subordinates as essentially men of business. Mr. Tierney was to claim this confidence as the man of business of the Opposition. He had disclaimers enough about him to make the attribute not too infectious. Mr. Tierney was the man of financial detail. There was one who then chiefly dedicated himself to the neglected walk of political economy. Francis Horner had won a high reputation by the unremitting assertion of large principles which indolence and prejudice had shrunk from examining. More than any man he had gone to the root of financial difficulties. His opinions were to be adopted when he lived not to expound them—others were to carry them into practice. It is something to be an earnest thinker in an age of debaters. His are labours that have more endurance than mere party-eminence. In the same ranks are a few other labourers “for all time.”

On the bench of honour sits one whose lofty port and composed features show him to be a man of no common aspirations. His habitual expression is earnest,

1816.

THE OPPOSITION.
MR. PONSONBY.

Lord Dudley’s
Letters, p. 171.
Romilly’s Life,
vol. iii., p. 307.

MR. TIERNEY.

FRANCIS HOR-
NER.

SIR S. ROMILLY.

1816.

solemn, almost severe. He has a great mission to fulfil, far above party politics and temporary contentions. Yet he is a partisan,—but not in the ordinary sense of the word. He is sometimes bitter, prejudiced, perhaps vindictive—yet no one more deeply feels than himself that this is not the temper for the attainment of great social improvements. His hopes are not sanguine. He sees little of amelioration in the present aspect of affairs; he fancies that evil principles are in the ascendant. He has nearly reached his sixtieth year; he has been in Parliament only ten years. But during that short period he has left an impression upon that assembly never to be obliterated. That lawyer, the acknowledged head of his own class, who in the House of Commons has won the highest reputation for sincerity of purpose, for vast ability, for the eloquence of a statesman as distinguished from that of an advocate, never rises without commanding the respect of a body not favourable to the claims of orators by profession. His forensic duties are too vast, his devotion to them too absorbing, the whole character of his mind too staid—perhaps too little imaginative and pliant—to make him the leader of his own scattered party. But as the founder of the noblest of our improvements, the reform of our hateful and inoperative penal laws, he will do what the most accomplished and versatile debater would have left undone. He will persevere, as he has persevered, amidst neglect, calumny, the frowns of power, the indifference of the people. The testament which he bequeaths will become sacred and triumphant. That man is Sir Samuel Romilly.

The place which Whitbread filled is vacant. A sudden, mysterious, and most melancholy death had silenced that fearless tongue, which, as it was the last to denounce the war of 1815, would have been the first to tear in pieces the treaties which that war had consummated. The miserable and oppressed listened to him as their friend and deliverer. His political enemies acknowledged his inflexible honesty. His love of justice made him generous even to those whom he habitually opposed. He had been for several years the true leader of the Opposition, and he had led them with right English courage. Others might win by stratagem; he was for the direct onslaught. He perished the day after Paris capitulated. Two nights before he had spoken in the House of Commons. His health had been long broken. He was desponding without a cause. Insanity came, and then the end. A French writer has had the vulgar audacity to say that Whitbread destroyed himself because he could not bear the triumph of his country at Waterloo. The same writer affirms that Canning betrayed to Fouché the plans of Castlereagh for the expedition to Walcheren. Both falsehoods may sleep together. No two men more dearly loved their country, whatever they might think of its policy. The place of Whitbread is vacant. He that comes to earn the succession to the same real leadership is not an unknown man—he is the Henry Brougham who, having appeared at the bar of the House of Commons, in 1808, as counsel for the great body of merchants and manufacturers against the Orders in Council, carried the repeal of those impolitic orders in 1812, after seven weeks of the most laborious and incessant exertion, almost unexampled in the records of Parliament. For three years, the place which he had won by a combination of industry and talent almost unprecedented had been surrendered to other tribunes of the people. The moment in which he re-appears is somewhat unfavourable to the highest exertions of his powers, for he has no

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worthy opponent. George Canning is not in his place in Parliament. He, who had sighed for peace, as Pitt sighed in the gloomy days of Austerlitz and Jena, was out of office during the triumphs of Leipsic and Vittoria. The peace of 1814 was accomplished without his aid. He had bowed before the humbler talents of his rival colleague, whom military success abroad had raised up into a disproportioned eminence at home. Time has shown how Canning was hated and feared by a large number of those who professed a common allegiance with himself to the principles of the son of Chatham. The hate and the fear applied as much to his principles as to his talents. The government of 1814 had secured his allegiance, and drawn the sting of his dreaded adherence to Liberal policies. They disarmed him; they had well nigh degraded him. They opened the Session of 1816 in the confidence that they could do without him. "They wondered what use he could be of, and why Lord Liverpool could have thought of making any terms with him." On the 10th June Canning took his place in the House of Commons as President of the Board of Control. The ten years which followed look like the last days of Parliamentary eloquence. What is left us may work as well; but at any rate it is something different.

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Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 137.

The cross-benches of neutrality in the House of Commons are not over full. The party of Canning has been scattered. But there sit a knot of men who hold the scales in one of the greatest questions—perhaps the most interesting question—that was ever agitated within the walls of Parliament. It is the party of the Abolitionists of the Slave Trade. Victory abroad is to them defeat, if it bring not the consummation of their hopes in the acts of foreign governments. At the peace of 1814, France—the restored government of France—restored by our money and our arms—refused to consent to the immediate abolition. Bonaparte, amidst his memorable acts of the Hundred Days, abolished the hateful traffic by a stroke of his pen—and it was abolished. The Bourbon government, a second time restored, dared no longer refuse this one demand of Great Britain. Had they refused, the British minister could scarcely have met the Parliament. He is now come to say that France has decreed that there shall be an end to this sin and shame. Other nations have promised. But—is it to be told that where we might have commanded, there alone is resistance?—Spain and Portugal still maintain the traffic. The firm band of Abolitionists are secure that their silver-tongued leader, he who resigned every meaner ambition to give freedom to the oppressed, will persevere through good report and evil report, with or without friends in power, till the chains of the negro are broken for ever. They fear not enemies—they truckle not for friends—they have a support above what the world can give. This "band of brothers"—reviled or honoured, proselytising or solitary—will hold their ground. They are the only united body of enthusiasts in an age of political calculation. They will manifest, as they have manifested, what enthusiasm may accomplish.

MR. WILBER-
FORCE.

CHAPTER II.

1816.

FOURTH SESSION
OF THE FIFTH
PARLIAMENT OF
THE UNITED
KINGDOM.

Brougham's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 634 :
Introduction to
Speech on Holy
Alliance.

THE PRINCE RE-
GENT'S SPEECH.

Hansard, vol.
xxxii. p. 48.

THE House of Commons of 1816 presented a remarkable spectacle. The ministry met the representatives of the people with all the pride and confidence of a triumph beyond hope. The ministerial leader came flushed from his labours of restoration and partition, and took his seat amidst shouts such as saluted Cæsar when he went up to the Capitol. The march to Paris, twice over, says a conspicuous actor in the politics of that hour, was sufficiently marvellous ; “ but it appeared, if possible, still more incredible, that we should witness Lord Castlereagh entering the House of Commons and resuming, amidst universal shouts of applause, the seat which he had quitted for a season to attend as a chief actor in the arrangement of continental territory.” The Opposition, considered numerically, were a broken and feeble body ; but, intellectually and morally, their strength was far more formidable in this the fourth session of the Parliament than at any previous period of its duration. In opposing the enormous war expenditure from 1812—in resisting the determination to make no peace with Napoleon—they had not with them the national sympathy. The tables were turned. They had now to contend against the evident partiality for continental alliances—the enormous standing army—the excessive peace-expenditure—the desire to perpetuate war-taxes. They were supported by public opinion, for the once accredited indivisibility of peace and plenty appeared to be wholly at an end. The people were suffering, and the excitement of the struggle against the domination of France having passed away, they were not disposed to suffer in silence.

The speech from the Throne, delivered by Commissioners, was necessarily a speech of congratulation. Splendid successes, intimate union, precautionary measures, these were the key-notes to our foreign policy : manufactures, commerce, and revenue were, somewhat rashly, declared to be flourishing at home ; economy was hinted at—economy consistent with the security of the country, “ and with that station which we occupy in Europe.” In the House of Lords there was no amendment to the Address. In the Commons a bootless amendment, which was seconded by Lord John Russell *, declared the country to be suffering under “ unexampled domestic embarrassments,” and demanded “ a careful revisal of our civil and military establishments, according to the principles of the most rigid economy.” The Chancellor of the Exchequer on this occasion declared his intention to continue the Property or Income Tax, on the modified scale of 5 per cent. This avowal was the signal for one of the chief battle-cries which were to lead on the scanty powers of Opposition. Party hostility was not disarmed by the deportment of the Foreign Minister. Mr. Brougham having denounced Ferdinand of Spain as “ a contemptible tyrant,” Lord Castlereagh thereupon deprecated “ that scrutinising criticism of the inter-

* Lord John Russell was in Parliament in 1814.

nal policy of foreign countries, which could only be properly exercised at home." The lecture was not forgotten.

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TREATIES.

The treaties with foreign powers were presented to Parliament on the first day of the session. The formal debate upon them was deferred for a fortnight. Mr. Brougham had previously brought forward a motion for the production of a copy of the Treaty between Russia, Austria, and Prussia, of the 26th September, 1815—the Treaty of Holy Alliance. Lord Castlereagh had declared, when notice of Mr. Brougham's motion was given, with reference to this extraordinary document, that "its object was confined solely to the contracting parties, and breathed the pure spirit of the Christian religion." The motion was of course rejected. It was not till a later period of our history that it was shown that there was cause for alarm, "when sovereigns spoke of leading armies to protect religion, peace, and justice." Mr. Brougham also moved for a copy of a Treaty said to have been concluded at Vienna in January, 1815. Lord Castlereagh admitted the existence of such a Treaty, and that this country had been a party to it; but he refused to produce it, affirming that it was a mere matter of history. "Yes," said Mr. Tierney, "and like other matter of history, it was necessary that it should be known, because the knowledge of it bore on other times." It appears to have been considered in the House of Commons that this alliance was directed solely against Russia. The "historical fact" has become clearer: the contracting powers, thus prepared for the last resort, had not a common danger once more united them, were Austria, France, and England, against Russia and Prussia. The motion for the production of this Treaty was also rejected.

Mr. Brougham's
Speech.
Hansard, vol.
xxxii. p. 353.

Hansard, vol.
xxxii. p. 370.

Before the great discussion upon the general treaties took place, the Government declared its intention with regard to the peace establishment. There was to be an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, maintained at an expense of little short of thirty millions; and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs justified this course by the example of the large military establishments of the other nations of Europe. It was on a debate in the Committee of Supply that Lord Castlereagh used the memorable expression which roused a spirit in the country of deep hostility—almost of disgust: "He felt assured that the people of England would not, from an ignorant impatience to be relieved from the pressure of taxation, put everything to hazard, when everything might be accomplished by continued constancy and firmness." From the moment of this offensive declaration the Income Tax was doomed. The people had not borne the taxation of so many years of war with a heroism such as no people had ever before shown, to be taunted with ignorant impatience of taxation, now that they had won peace. The presumption of the Government at this period was calculated to produce a violent re-action throughout the land. In Parliament it produced alarms which now look exaggerated, but which men of unquestioned integrity most certainly entertained. The minor questions of continental arrangements were less regarded, and wisely so, than the peculiarities of our internal position. Men really thought that the old English spirit of freedom was about to be trampled upon. Lord Grenville, who on the first night of the session had given his heartiest assent to the Address, rejoicing in the mode by which the peace had been accomplished—the restoration of the Bourbons—now caused the Lords to be summoned; and on the 14th February, in moving for the esti-

Hansard, vol.
xxxiii. p. 455.

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Hansard, vol.
xxxii. p. 512.

mates for the military service for the year, delivered a speech that spoke something of the spirit of "the good old cause." He said, "The question which their lordships had now to consider was, whether, after a struggle of twenty-five years, maintained by such immense efforts, and at such vast expense, they were at length to obtain the blessings of that real peace for which they had so long contended, or whether their situation was to be exactly the reverse? Whether they were still to be charged with an immense military establishment; whether they were now to be called upon to take their rank among the military States of the Continent; whether they were to abandon the wise maxims and policy of their forefathers, by which the country had risen to such a height, and had been enabled to make such great exertions, and, at an humble distance, turn servile imitators of those systems which had been the cause of so much distress and calamity to the nations by which they had been adopted and maintained?" The Prime Minister, in replying to Lord Grenville, called these "extraordinary and unreasonable fears." But they were re-echoed on many sides. When the great debates on the Treaties at length took place, in which the Earl of Liverpool moved the Address, Lord Grenville proposed an amendment which deprecated in the strongest language "the settled system to raise the country into a military power." The House divided, the Government having a majority of sixty-four. Lord Holland protested against the Address, in terms which embodied his speech upon the Treaties, and expressed the opinions of that section of the Opposition: "Because the treaties and engagements contain a direct guarantee of the present government of France against the people of that country; and in my judgment imply a general and perpetual guarantee of all European governments against the governed." In the House of Commons the Foreign Secretary moved the Address upon the Treaties. An amendment was proposed by Lord Milton, which deprecated the military occupation of France and the unexampled military establishments of this country. The debate lasted two nights, the Address being finally carried by a majority of a hundred and sixty-three. Romilly in his Diary has noted down the heads of his own speech: "As I consider this as the most important occasion that I ever spoke on, I have been desirous of preserving the memory of some of the things I have said." The importance of the occasion could not have been over-estimated. But what was said on both sides was, to a considerable extent, the regular display of party conflict. The exultations of the Government at the settlement of their war-labours look now scarcely more inflated than the fears of some members of the Opposition that the confederated arms of the despots of Europe might be turned against the liberties of England. The practical business that was at hand—the enforcement of economy, the alleviation of distress—was the matter of real importance that was to grow out of these debates. There can be no doubt, however, that there was a strong and sincere belief amongst many good men that the liberties of this country were in eventual peril. Horner, in the debate on the Treaties, made a very powerful speech; and a week after he thus writes in the confidence of private friendship: "We are nearly declared to be a military power. If this design is not checked, of which I have slender hopes, or does not break down by favour of accidents, we shall have a transient glory for some little while. The bravery of our men, the virtues which the long enjoyment of liberty will leave long after it is

Romilly's Life,
vol. iii. p. 229.Horner's Memoirs,
vol. ii.
p. 315.

gone, and the financial exertions of which we are still capable, will insure us that distinction; but it is a glory in which our freedom will be lost, and which cannot maintain itself when the vigour, born of that freedom, is spent." Visionary as we may now regard these opinions to be, the expression of them had its use. When Horner rejoiced that he had "his breath out about the Bourbons and Castlereagh," he, in common with other eminent men of his party, did something to repress the spirit which success had produced in high places. The ultra Whigs, when they groaned over the captivity of Napoleon—when they shut their eyes to much that had been really high-minded in the conduct of the Allies towards France—when they saw only danger in the future, overlooking the mighty peril from which we had escaped—had not the country with them. They had not the support of the great bulk of the intelligent population, who, except on special occasions, are not party politicians. But when they addressed themselves, not as partisans, but as earnest representatives of the people, to reduce the public burthens, and to repress a career of wasteful expenditure, they were on safer ground.

The Corporation of London took the lead in the national expression of opinion against the Property Tax. Their petition complained of the violation of the solemn faith of Parliament,—of the injustice, vexation, and oppression of this tax,—of the partiality of taxing, in the same proportion, incomes of a short duration, and those arising from fixed and permanent property;—they acknowledged the depressed state of the agricultural interests, but they contended that the manufacturing and trading interests were equally depressed, and equally borne down with the weight of taxation; they finally called for reduction in the public expenditure, and the abolition of all unnecessary places, pensions, and sinecures. It was not alone the anti-ministerial party of the city that joined in the petition;—the judgments of mercantile men against the continuance of the tax were almost universal. The dislike of the rural population was as fixed as that of the inhabitants of towns. The battle against this tax was one of the most remarkable examples of Parliamentary strategy that was ever displayed; and the history of the struggle has been most pithily told by the leading tactician:—"On the termination of the war, the Government were determined, instead of repealing the whole income tax, which the Act enforcing it declared to be 'for and during the continuance of the war and no longer,' to retain one half of it, that is, to reduce it from ten to five per cent., and thus keep a revenue raised from this source of between seven and eight millions, instead of fifteen. As soon as this intention was announced, several meetings were held, and two or three petitions were presented. The Ministers perceived the risk they ran, if the policy should be pursued, of continued discussion for a length of time; and they saw the vast importance of dispatch. Accordingly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice on the Tuesday for his motion on the Thursday immediately following. The Opposition took the alarm, and Mr. Brougham declared, on presenting a petition, numerously signed, from one of the London parishes, that if the hurry now indicated should be persevered in, he should avail himself of all the means of delay afforded by the forms of the House. Lord Folkestone, one of the most strenuous, and in those days one of the most active and powerful supporters of the popular cause, vigorously seconded this menace, in which he

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PROPERTY TAX.

Brougham's
Speeches :
Introduction to
Speeches on
Agricultural and
Manufacturing
Distress, vol. i.
p. 495.

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entirely joined. On the next day more petitions were flung in, more discussions took place, and the Government postponed for a week the introduction of the bill. That week proved quite decisive: for so many meetings were held, and so many petitions sent up, that the bill was put off from time to time, and did not finally make its appearance till the 17th of March. Above six weeks were almost entirely spent by the House of Commons in receiving the numberless petitions poured in from all quarters against the tax. For it was speedily seen that the campaign of 1812* was renewed, and that the same leaders, Messrs. Brougham and Baring, had the management of the operations.

“At first the Ministers pursued the course of obstinate silence. The Opposition debated each petition in vain; every Minister and ministerial member held his peace. No arguments, no facts, no sarcasms, no taunts, could rouse them; no expression of the feelings of the country, no reference to the anxiety of particular constituencies, could draw a word from the Ministers and their supporters. At length it was perceived that their antagonists did not the less debate, and that consequently the scheme had failed in its purpose of stifling discussion. The only effect of it then was, that all the debating was on one side, and this both became hurtful to the Government in the House, and more hurtful still in the country. They were forced into discussion, therefore; and then began a scene of unexampled interest, which lasted until the second reading of the bill. Each night, at a little after four, commenced the series of debates, which lasted until past midnight. These were of infinite variety. Arguments urged by different speakers; instances of oppression and hardship recounted; anecdotes of local suffering and personal inconvenience; accounts of the remarkable passages at different meetings; personal altercations interspersed with more general matter—all filled up the measure of the night’s bill of fare; and all were so blended and so variegated, that no one ever perceived any hour thus spent to pass tediously away. Those not immediately concerned, Peers, or persons belonging to neither House, flocked to the spectacle which each day presented. The interest excited out of doors kept pace with that of the spectators; and those who carried on these active operations showed a vigour and constancy of purpose, an unwearied readiness for the combat, which astonished while it animated all beholders. It is recounted of this remarkable struggle, that one night towards the latter end of the period in question, when, at a late hour, the House having been in debate from four o’clock, one speaker had resumed his seat, the whole members sitting upon one entire bench rose at once and addressed the chair,—a testimony of unabated spirit and unquenchable animation, which drew forth the loudest cheers from all sides of the House.

“At length came the 17th of March, the day appointed for the division; but it was soon found that this had been, with the debate, wholly anticipated. The usual number of petitions, and even more, were poured thickly in during some hours; little or no debating took place upon them; unusual anxiety for the result of such long-continued labour, and such lengthened excitement, kept all silent and in suspense; when, about eleven o’clock, Sir William Curtis, representing the City of London, proceeded up the House, bearing in his arms the petition, which he presented without any remark, of the great meeting of

* The resistance to the Orders in Council.—K.

the bankers and merchants, holden in the Egyptian Hall, and signed by twelve thousand persons.* The division took place after a debate that did not last half an hour; no one could indeed be heard in an assembly so impatient for the decision; and by a majority of thirty-seven voices the tax was defeated for ever, and the wholesome principle, as Mr. Wilberforce well observed, was laid down, that war and income tax are wedded together."

The Ministers did not expect this defeat. They had calculated on a majority of forty. The Opposition expected to lose by twenty. It was not a *party* triumph. The national feeling was irresistible. Even members of the Tory party assisted at and rejoiced in the issue. Mr. Ward writes from Paris: "It was amusing enough to see the effect the defeat of our ministry upon the question of the Income Tax produced upon the minds of the people here. Most of them thought that the government would be changed, and that the Whigs would come in, and probably let loose Napoleon to disturb the world for the third time. If I had been in the House, I should have voted in the minority, and yet, I confess, I am not sorry it was a minority. Not that I am by any means convinced that the Income Tax ought to have been repealed, but because I think the ministry wanted beating upon something, no great matter what." Mr. Ward rejoiced because he sighed for the return of his friend Canning to office. But the people exulted in the abolition of the Property Tax upon no such narrow ground. They were suffering; and they saw no more effectual way to relieve their sufferings than to remove the means of prodigal expenditure. There can be no doubt that the landed interest, of whatever party, were amongst the principal instruments in removing this burthen from the land, which they declared could then pay no rent. Whether the decision was a permanently wise one may now be doubted. It was salutary at the time,—for it dispelled the belief that resistance to taxation was "ignorant impatience." The Chancellor of the Exchequer took a somewhat remarkable course after this defeat. He voluntarily abandoned the war-duties upon malt—amounting to about 2,700,000*l.* The decision of the House would compel him to resort to the money-market—in other words, to raise a loan: "It was of little consequence that the loan should be increased by the amount of the calculated produce of the malt-duty." Lord Castlereagh said it was "a matter of indifference whether they took a loan of six or eight millions." This was the "indifference"—the result of a long course of unbounded expense—that required all the efforts of the people and of their friends, during many years, to change into responsibility. No minister could now dare to speak of its being a matter of indifference whether he added two millions to the public debt. When we look at this temper of the Government, we may excuse the bursts of indignation which were sometimes directed in Parliament even against the highest Executive authority. It cannot be denied that, in a time of very general distress, the Prince Regent indulged in a career of unbounded extravagance. An indecent contempt of public opinion—a perseverance in the indulgence of sensual appetites and frivolous tastes—had made him, "in all but name a king," deservedly

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Mr. Hallam's
Letter in Hor-
ner's Memoirs,
vol. ii. p. 318.

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 136.

* This is a mistake. Sir William Curtis spoke with great emphasis:—"He was present in the House when the tax was first proposed, and he heard Mr. Pitt declare that it should be

a war-tax only, and should positively cease on the restoration of peace." The division did not take place till the 18th.—K.

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unpopular. The unhappy circumstances of his domestic position were in themselves enough to estrange from him much of the respect of the people. To counteract the evil influences of his past life, his conduct ought to have been at least decorous, when he was called to the possession of supreme power; for he had few public virtues to compensate for the offensiveness of his private example. His duties to the State,—the mere routine of the kingly office,—were invariably performed with tardiness and reluctance. Without any strength of character but that which proceeded from his irresistible craving for ease and indulgence, his best qualities were distorted into effeminate vices. The constitutional bravery of his house forsook him, and he became a moral coward, whom his official servants had to govern as a petted child. Bred up amongst Whig friends and flatterers, he at once professed respect for the democratic parts of the constitution, with an instinctive hatred of public opinion. The feebleness of his intellect,—the debasing character of his passions,—made him miserable in the unequal contest between his sense of duty and his desires. He was subdued into the perfect Sybarite,—and his people despised him. Men everywhere spoke out; and it was not surprising that the public voice was echoed in the House of Commons. When opinions there found vent, there was abundant sympathy out of doors to satisfy one daring orator for the coldness of his party. Sir S. Romilly writes on the 20th March: “A motion of disapprobation of the increase which has lately been made of the salary of Secretary to the Admiralty in time of peace from 3000*l.* to 4000*l.* a-year, was rejected by a majority of 29; there being for the motion 130, and against it 159. In the course of the debate upon it, Brougham, who supported the motion, made a violent attack upon the Regent, whom he described as devoted, in the recesses of his palace, to the most vicious pleasures, and callous to the distresses and sufferings of others, in terms which would not have been too strong to have described the latter days of Tiberius. Several persons who would have voted for the motion were so disgusted that they went away without voting; and more, who wished for some tolerable pretext for not voting against Ministers, and who on this occasion could not vote with them, availed themselves of this excuse, and went away too; and it is generally believed that, but for this speech of Brougham’s, the Ministers would have been again in a minority. If this had happened, many persons believe, or profess to believe, that the Ministers would have been turned out. Poor Brougham is loaded with the reproaches of his friends; and many of them who are most impatient to get into office look upon him as the only cause that they are still destined to labour on in an unprofitable opposition. I have no doubt that, whatever had been the division, the Ministers would still have continued in office. But it is not the less true that Brougham’s speech was very injudicious as well as very unjust; for, with all the Prince’s faults, and they are great enough, it is absurd to speak of him as if he were one of the most sensual and unfeeling tyrants that ever disgraced a throne.”

It does not appear in the imperfect reports of the Parliamentary Debates, that the Prince Regent was spoken of as strongly as Romilly represents. The language of Mr. Brougham was indeed described by Mr. Wellesley Pole to be “such language as he had never listened to in that House before”—“such expressions as in his life he had never before heard any man utter who attempted

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to call himself a friend to the House of Brunswick." And yet Sir Robert Heron had, on the 12th of February previous, spoken in almost as unmeasured terms of "royal extravagance;" and there was "laughter" in that House when he thus described the aspect of the court:—"You have assumed a most imposing situation; your armies have expelled one despot and set up another; you have a prince who has so much dignity, that he expends as great a sum on a thatched cottage as another monarch would on a palace; so dignified is he, so magnificent are his ideas, that he cannot endure to see the same furniture in his house for two successive years; he is such a friend to trade that he cannot give less than eight hundred guineas for a clock; and such a protector is he of the arts, that he pays six thousand pounds for a Chinese cabinet." And then Sir Robert Heron talked of "the principal causes of the French Revolution." Again, on the 4th March, Mr. Methuen, who a month before had seconded the ministerial Address, said, that "had he the good fortune to be one of the constitutional advisers of the Crown, he would go boldly forward and say,—You must keep your faith with the people, by abstaining from an extravagance which inexperience cannot palliate, and which poverty cannot justify." The plain speaking of Mr. Brougham was not, therefore, without precedent. But, however the Whig party may have felt themselves compromised, however the Tory party might have denounced any allusion to the personal character of him who exercised the sovereign attributes—we are not sure that the public interests were not truly served by one who fearlessly pointed out those "who, in utter disregard of the feelings of an oppressed and insulted nation, proceeded from one wasteful expenditure to another; who decorated and crowded their houses with the splendid results of their extravagance; who associated with the most profligate of human beings; who, when the gaols were filled with wretches, could not suspend for a moment their thoughtless amusements, to end the sad suspense between life and death."* We may now, without any violation of "the duty and the loyalty we owe," think it as fitting that public opinion should penetrate a palace, through the solemnly uttered censure of representatives of the people, as that the voice of praise only should reach the ears of princes. When the mightiest of the earth proclaim aloud that they live for their own pleasures alone, it is time that under a free government there should be some authoritative demonstration, to avert the contagion of the sensualist's example, if not to pale his cheek with words almost as fearful as those which suspended the revelry in the halls of Belshazzar. From the House of Commons the voice of the people might go forth without the dread of *ex-officio* informations,—the common shield of power in the days of the Regency. "Twopenny post bags" might make the mob of idle readers of all parties laugh at "Fum and Hum," and "The Marchesa," and "The Royal Dandy;" but there are seasons when the people should be made thoughtful,—and this was especially one of those seasons. The danger of fostering discontent was small, when compared with the danger of suffering those who ought to

Hansard, vol.
xxxii. p. 409.Hansard, vol.
xxxiii. p. 496.See Moore's
Poetical Works.

* This subject was debated on the 18th March, two nights before Mr. Brougham's offensive speech, when it appeared that there were fifty-eight persons under sentence of death in Newgate, many of whom had been convicted at the December sessions. "The

difficulty and inconvenience of assembling the law officers at Brighton," and "the indisposition of the Prince Regent" (his Royal Highness was suffering from gout), were the reasons assigned for this neglect.

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live for example, to believe that they were wholly above the control of opinion. The damage to the expectants of office, on this particular occasion, may be laid aside, with many similar conventionalities, as a matter in which the nation is now, as it was then, wholly uninterested.

CIVIL LIST.

In the Session of 1815 the excess upon the Civil List—that is, the amount spent in the support of the royal state and establishments, beyond the sum set aside by Parliament—was no less than 530,000*l*. In 1816 it was mentioned that there was a present debt of 277,000*l*. upon the Civil List, but that this arrear would be provided for out of the Droits of the Crown. The annual grant to the Crown, instead of the old “hereditary revenue,” was 800,000*l*. Out of this sum were to be paid the salaries of the judges of the realm, the expenses of foreign ministers and consuls, the salaries of certain high officers of state, besides other matters that did not pertain to the personal expenses of royalty. The average expenditure of seven years up to 1811 had been 1,103,000*l*. In 1815 it was 1,480,000*l*., having rapidly increased since 1811. The necessity for two royal establishments, that of the afflicted King at Windsor and that of the Regent, involved some additional expense; but there was a source of expense far beyond ministerial estimates and parliamentary resolutions. A bill was brought in by the Ministry for the better regulation of the Civil List; and during its progress much anxious discussion took place. It appeared that the Droits of the Crown, and of the Admiralty, were constantly applied in aid of the Civil List, and that Parliament was still called upon to provide a large arrear. It was contended that Parliament ought to take the appropriation of these convenient funds into its own hands, so that the nation should be cognizant of the amount that went in aid of the Civil List revenue. The ministerial bill for the regulation of this expenditure, which was undoubtedly a step in reform, was carried. In the House of Lords a motion of Earl Grosvenor “that a Committee be appointed to consider what places and offices may be abolished, consistent with the public safety,” was negatived by a large majority.

The debates upon the army estimates, which eventually caused some reduction—the rejection of the property-tax—the searching inquiry into the Civil List—the agitation of the question of sinecure offices—were indications of the feeling which any Government would have to encounter that did not resolutely determine that a season of peace should be a season of economy. Upon these points the tone of public opinion was decided. It was not a factious, it was not a disloyal tone. The nation could discriminate between grants for worthy and grants for disreputable objects. When the details of the Civil List exhibited items of wanton and ridiculous luxury, the members of the administration themselves were pained and humiliated. When the same ministers proposed the magnificent establishment for the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold, upon their marriage, not a dissentient voice was heard in Parliament; the nation was unanimous in the wish to be liberal almost to profusion. For why? The nation saw in this marriage of the presumptive heiress of the Crown—a marriage of affection—some assured hope that public duties might be fitly learned in the serenity of domestic happiness. The private virtues were felt to be the best preparation for the possession of sovereign power. The idea of a patriot queen discharging all her high functions with steady alacrity, confident in the affections of her people, of simple habits, of refined and intellectual tastes, her

throne sanctified by the attributes of womanly affection—such hopes were something to console the nation for the present endurance of authority that claimed only “mouth-honour,” without love or respect. The marriage of the Princess Charlotte was hailed as a public blessing. It took place at Carlton House, on the evening of the 2nd of May. There was perfect unanimity in the House of Commons as to the vote for the establishment of the royal pair. 60,000*l.* a-year was the large sum determined on, with an income of 50,000*l.* a-year to the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, should his Serene Highness survive the Princess Charlotte. The most ample testimony was given in both Houses to the excellent character of the Prince who was thus united to the presumptive heiress of the British crown.

1816.

MARRIAGE OF
THE PRINCESS
CHARLOTTE.

1816.

AGRICULTURE.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the Government, in the name of the Prince Regent, informed Parliament that "the manufactures, commerce, and revenue of the United Kingdom were in a flourishing condition," the exception of agriculture was a sufficient announcement that the cry of "Distress" was near at hand.

The history of "Agricultural Distress" is the history of agricultural abundance. Whenever Providence, through the blessing of genial seasons, fills the nation's stores with plenteousness, then, and then only, has the cry of ruin to the cultivator been proclaimed as the one great evil for legislation to redress. It was ever so. Pepys, in his *Diary* of January, 1667-8, writes, "Here they did talk much of the present cheapness of corn, even to a miracle; so as their farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands." There had been a cycle of scarcity from 1658 to 1664, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 57s. a quarter. There was a cycle of plenty from 1665 to 1671, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 36s. per quarter. The obvious remedy for this excess in the disposable produce of one country was to export the corn to other countries, which had not been equally impoverished by abundance. Pepys, a shrewd man of business, saw the remedy: "Farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands, and would pay in corn: but our gentry are grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry, that they know not how to bestow this corn; which, did they understand but a little trade, they would be able to join together and know what markets there are abroad, and send it thither, and thereby ease their tenants, and be able to pay themselves." But the natural law of commercial intercourse—the law by which the bounty of the All-giver would be distributed amongst his universal family, so as to compensate for the inequalities of soil and climate—this law was despised as long ago as the time of Charles II. by the conventional law-makers, who were "grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry," and did not understand even "a little trade." To remedy the evil of cheapness they made the famous Corn Law of 1670, which imposed duties on the importation of grain, amounting to prohibition. The restrictions upon exportation were removed: wheat might be exported upon the payment of a shilling per quarter customs duty. But importation was not to be free till the price of wheat had reached 80s. per quarter. When it was at 53s. 4d. a duty of 16s. was to be paid; when above that price and under the mysterious compensation price of 80s., a duty of 8s. was to be paid. The more famous Corn Law of 1815 was but a copy of the Corn Law of 1670. Amidst the best and the worst species of opposition—the power of argument and the weakness of tumult—a Bill was in 1815 hurried through Parliament which absolutely closed the ports till the price of wheat rose to 80s. After the passing of the Corn Law of 1670 there was as much "Agricultural Distress" as before, till dearth came to the relief of the suffering cultivator. Farms were thrown up, rents were reduced. In 1673, in

Pepys' *Diary*,
vol. iv. p. 1.

Eton Tables.

spite of the prohibitory laws against importation, and the unlimited freedom of exportation, wheat was as low as 35s. In 1674 there came the landlord's blessing of a bad harvest, and the price of wheat rose to 64s. The cycle of scarcity had come round. It was precisely the same after the Corn Law of 1815. It was passed during a season of wonderful abundance. It produced the immediate good to the landed interest of preventing the abundant supply being increased by importation; but the effect which it produced to the nation was to dry up the resources in years of scarcity which the foresight of other countries might have provided. The war-and-famine price of 1812 was again reached in the latter part of 1816, in 1817 and 1818. The golden days of the deity that is found in no mythology, the anti-Ceres, were returned. But the people were starving. Misery and insurrection filled the land.

1816.

Roger Coke,
quoted in
Tooke's History
of Prices, vol. i.
p. 24.

It may be convenient at this place if we refer to the changes which were produced by the Corn Law of 1815, and briefly exhibit the arguments by which it was maintained or opposed.

In 1814, the Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons presented in 1813, of which Committee Sir Henry Parnell was chairman, was adopted as the basis of certain resolutions then debated. The first of the resolutions declared "that it is expedient that the exportation of corn, grain, meal, malt, and flour, from any part of the United Kingdom, should be permitted at all times, without the payment of any duty, and without receiving any bounty whatever." This resolution was carried in the same year, and passed into law. With regard to the importation of corn, it was proposed in resolutions laid upon the table in 1813, that till wheat should be 105s. 2d. a quarter, and other grain in the same proportion, the importation should be subject to a prohibitory duty. This proposed sum was, in 1814, reduced to 84s., when wheat might be admitted upon payment of 2s. 6d. In 1791 the nominal duty price was fixed at 54s., in 1804 at 66s. In offering objections of detail to these resolutions, Mr. Rose, a member of the Government, "took it for granted that no one now entertains the remotest idea of an entirely free trade in corn." The reasoning of those who call themselves advocates of free trade fully justified his belief. Sir Henry Parnell "had always avowed himself the friend of a free trade. . . . If the corn and commodities of this country were on a level with those of the rest of Europe, he should then think it unnecessary to introduce an artificial system. But the price of corn in England had risen higher than in any other country in Europe, in consequence of the interruption of late years of our communication with the continent, and formed an exception to the general rule." That is to say, as the war of a quarter of a century had prevented importation under ordinary circumstances, and consequently raised the price of the people's food to an inordinate height, it was necessary to perpetuate the war-system upon the return of peace. Mr. Huskisson, as might be expected, was somewhat more logical in his advocacy of a high duty upon importation. He had proposed a sliding scale, under which the free importation price was 87s., and his argument was that "the whole of our commercial and economical system was a system of artificial expedients. If our other regulations with regard to the price of commodities stood upon the basis of the principles of free trade, then there could be no possible objection to leaving our agricultural productions to find their own level. But, so long as our commerce

Hansard, vol.
xxvii. p. 694.

Hansard, vol.
xxvii. p. 612.

Huskisson's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 296.

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and manufactures were encouraged and forced by protections, by bounties, and by restraints on importation from abroad, he saw no reason why the laws relating to the growth of corn should alone form an exception to this general system in almost all other respects." On the other hand, those who represented the commercial interests were not sufficiently in advance of their time to deprecate the general system of protections and bounties for which they had so long clamoured; but they saw the natural resources of commerce that would be opened by a free trade in corn, and the evils of a restricted trade. Mr. Phillips said, "if a free trade in grain were to be allowed, it would lead to an improvement of our general commerce. This increase of commerce would give rise to an increase of national wealth, and consequently an increase of population, which in the end would afford an additional encouragement to agriculture." Mr. Baring (now Lord Ashburton), in reply to the argument that the high duties on importation would make the price of bread steady, contended that "steady prices were never produced by restriction. Apply the doctrine of restriction to any one county in England, and it would be found that the doing so would not have the effect of steadying the prices in that particular county: on the contrary, the bread would be alternately high and low, according as there was a good or bad harvest in that particular spot; deprived, as it would be, of intercourse with the rest of the kingdom. As the whole of England was to any particular county in England in this respect, such exactly was the whole of Europe as to England."

Hansard, vol.
xxvii. p. 1094.

Hansard, vol.
xxvii. p. 1100.

The Corn Bill of 1814 was opposed by very numerous petitions; and on this account, and also with reference to the lateness of the session, the Bill was thrown out. But in the spring of 1815 the measure was hurried through the House, in spite of the most earnest and solemn petitions of great bodies of the commercial and manufacturing interests throughout the country. The average price of wheat was under 60s. a quarter; if it rose to 66s., the ports would be opened. The excitement was universal. The landlords and farmers were filled with terror,—for the continental markets were open. The unreflecting multitudes of the capital and in some manufacturing districts were ready for violence. The political economists were divided in their opinions. The lowest point at which importation could take place was finally fixed at 80s. by a large majority of both Houses, with little that could be called discussion. Argument was exhausted in 1814.

It was under the Corn Law of 1815, a year after its hasty enactment, that the majority of the landed interest came to Parliament to ask for the remission of peculiar burthens, and to demand fresh protection. They had learnt nothing from the solemn protest against that law which some of the most eminent and the most wealthy of the Peers had inscribed in their Journals. It was in vain that the greatest amongst landed proprietors,—Buckingham, Carlisle, Devonshire, Spencer—the most eminent amongst statesmen,—Grey, Grenville, Wellesley,—had recorded these memorable words: "We cannot persuade ourselves that this law will ever contribute to produce plenty, cheapness, or steadiness of price. So long as it operates at all, its effects must be the opposite of these. Monopoly is the parent of scarcity, of dearness, and of uncertainty. To cut off any of the sources of supply can only tend to lessen its abundance; to close against ourselves the cheapest market for any com-

Protest.
Hansard, vol.
xxx. p. 263.

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modity must enhance the price at which we purchase it; and to confine the consumer of corn to the produce of his own country, is to refuse to ourselves the benefit of that provision which Providence itself has made for equalizing to man the variations of season and of climate." The landed interest of 1816 could not foresee that, within five years, the very House of Commons that had passed the Corn Law of 1815 would receive from one of its own Committees a Report, drawn up by an iconoclast minister of state, that should thus pull down the image of clay which he himself had assisted them to set up:—"This system is certainly liable to sudden alterations, of which the effect may be at one time to reduce prices, already low, lower than they would probably have been under a state of free trade, and at another unnecessarily to enhance prices already high;—to aggravate the evils of scarcity, and to render more severe the depression of prices from abundance. On the one hand, it deceives the grower with the false hope of a monopoly, and, by its occasional interruption, may lead to consequences which deprive him of the benefits of that monopoly, when most wanted;—on the other hand, it holds out to the country the prospect of an occasional free trade, but so regulated and desultory as to baffle the calculations and unsettle the transactions both of the grower and of the dealer at home;—to deprive the consumer of most of the benefits of such a trade, and to involve the merchant in more than the ordinary risks of mercantile speculation. It exposes the markets of the country either to be occasionally overwhelmed with an inundation of foreign corn; altogether disproportionate to its wants, or in the event of any considerable deficiency in our own harvest, it creates a sudden competition on the Continent, by the effect of which the prices there are rapidly and unnecessarily raised against ourselves. But the inconvenient operation of the present corn law, which appears to be less the consequence of the quantity of foreign grain brought into this country, upon an average of years, than of the manner in which that grain is introduced, is not confined to great fluctuations in price, and consequent embarrassment both to the grower and the consumer; for the occasional prohibition of import has also a direct tendency to contract the extent of our commercial dealings with other states, and to excite in the rulers of those states a spirit of permanent exclusion against the productions or manufactures of this country and its colonies. In this conflict of retaliatory exclusion, injurious to both, the two parties, however, are not upon an equal footing;—on our part, prohibition must yield to the wants of the people; on the other side there is no such overruling necessity. And inasmuch as reciprocity of demand is the foundation of all means of payment, a large and sudden influx of corn might, under these circumstances, excite a temporary derangement of the course of exchange, the effects of which (after the resumption of cash payments) might lead to a drain of specie from the Bank, the consequent contraction of its circulation, a panic among the country banks,—all aggravating the distress of a public dearth, as has been experienced at former periods of scarcity."

Report of the
Select Committee
of the House of
Commons on de-
pressed State of
Agriculture, 1821:
ascribed to Mr.
Huskisson.

This was at once judgment and prophecy. But the landed interest of 1816 had but one remedy for every evil—unequal remission of taxation conjoined with protection. They desired themselves to pay less to the state than their fellow-subjects; they required the state to limit their fellow-subjects to that exclusive market for the necessities of life which should dry up the sources of profitable industry,

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and thus make their taxation doubly burthensome. On the 7th March Mr. Western laid upon the table of the House a series of fourteen Resolutions, which declared the "unexampled distress" of those whose capitals are employed in agriculture; the danger of the continuance of such distress; the insufficient demand for the produce of agriculture, so as to cover the heavy charges and burthens upon it, and the necessity for reducing those burthens—taxes, tithes, and poor-rates. The Resolutions then demanded the repeal of so much of the Act of 1815 as should allow foreign corn to be warehoused, so that only British corn should be stored; and urged an advance of money by the Government to such individuals as might be inclined to buy up our native produce. The principle upon which all this was advocated was a sufficiently broad one: "That excessive taxation renders it necessary to give protection to all articles the produce of our own soil, against similar articles the growth of foreign countries, not subject to the same burthens;" and "that it is therefore expedient to impose additional duties and restrictions on the importation of all articles the produce of foreign agriculture." It is a remarkable example of the power of the landed interest in the House of Commons, that these assertions and unconditional demands were received not only with tolerance, but respect. The day-spring of economical politics had scarcely yet dawned. Amongst the representatives of the people Mr. Huskisson was all sympathy with the mover of these Resolutions, "whom he would venture to call his honourable friend." Mr. Brougham, although opposed to bounties upon exportation, and the exclusion of foreign corn from our warehouses, spoke approvingly of the Corn Law of 1815 as "politic, at the least as a palliative, or as affording the means of carrying the country through difficulties, the greatest pressure of which we may hope will only prove temporary." This temper, even amidst men not essentially supporters of class-interests, will not be wondered at when we consider the preponderating power of landed property in the House of Commons at that time. The strength either of the Ministry or the Opposition essentially depended upon the numerical force of the country gentlemen. The commercial and manufacturing interests were most imperfectly represented. The landed aristocracy had retained official power, in association with a few "clerkly" workers, from the earliest feudal times. The admission of a merchant to the councils of the sovereign would have been deemed pollution. The mill-owners had carried us through the war; yet as a political body they were without influence, almost without a voice. There was no one in the House of Commons who had either the courage or the ability to probe the wounds of the agricultural interests, which were thus paraded before the nation.

The distress of the agriculturists was thus stated, in 1816, in general terms, by Mr. Western:—"Between two and three years ago agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state; and yet, within the short period which has since elapsed, thousands have been already ruined, and destitution seems to impend over the property of all those whose capital is engaged in the cultivation of the soil." The causes assigned by him were excessive taxation, the reduction of the paper currency, tithes, poor-rates. "Yet, in spite of all these burthens, up to the middle of 1813 agriculture did sustain them, and under the weight of their united pressure continued to make most rapid advances." But the chief cause, as most correctly stated by Mr. Western, was "a redun-

Huskisson's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 312.

Brougham's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 333.

Hansard, vol.
xxxiii. p. 34.

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dant supply in the markets, a supply considerably beyond the demand, and that created chiefly by the produce of our own agriculture." With equal correctness did the speaker add, "It is perfectly well known that if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency; the effect, indeed, is almost incalculable: so likewise in a surplus of supply beyond demand, the price will fall in a ratio exceeding almost tenfold the amount of such surplus." And yet, with this knowledge of general principles, the same speaker asserts that in the period when "agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state," the profits of agriculture were not large. Let us endeavour to elucidate his position that "if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency." More than a century ago it had been computed that but one-tenth of the defect in the harvest may raise the price three-tenths, and two-tenths deficiency raise the price eight-tenths. This was the opinion of D'Avenant and Gregory King. Mr. Tooke, in quoting this passage, says, "There is some ground for supposing that the estimate is not very wide of the truth, from observation of the repeated occurrence of the fact, that the price of corn in this country has risen from 100 to 200 per cent. and upwards, when the utmost computed deficiency of the crops has not been more than between one-sixth and one-third below an average, and when that deficiency has been relieved by foreign supplies." Upon this principle we may estimate the value of Mr. Western's assertion that, during the flourishing years to which he refers, the profits of agriculture had not been large. If the produce of an acre of wheat in good years be thirty-three bushels, sold for 6s. a bushel, the amount realised would be 9*l.* 18*s.* If the produce in an unfavourable season were diminished one-sixth, and the price raised from 6*s.* to 12*s.*, the 27½ bushels would produce 16*l.* 10*s.* The difference is profit. At the commencement of the war, in 1793, the average price of wheat was 4*s.* 6*d.* a quarter; in 1794 it was 54*s.*; in 1795 and 1796, years of scarcity, it was above 80*s.*; in 1797 and 1798 it fell again to the prices of 1794. The harvests of 1799 and 1800 were fearful visitations of scarcity. At Michaelmas, 1799, the quarter of wheat sold for 92*s.*, and at Michaelmas, 1800, for 128*s.* The winter of 1800-1 was the season of the greatest privation that had been experienced in this country since the days when famine was a common occurrence: before the harvest of 1801 the quarter of wheat had risen to 177*s.*, and the quartern loaf had reached the fearful price of 2*s.* within a halfpenny. From 1802 to 1807 were years of abundance; but the price of wheat never went down to that of the years preceding 1800. During these six years the lowest average price of any one year was 60*s.*, the average price of the six years was 75*s.* But the six years from 1808 to 1813 were years of deficient produce; the price of wheat during that period went up according to the principle of Gregory King and of Mr. Western. The price before the harvest of 1808 was 74*s.* 6*d.* the quarter; at the same period in 1809 it was 100*s.*; in 1810, 120*s.*; in 1811, 104*s.*; in 1812, 136*s.*; in 1813, 136*s.* The average price of the six years, 108*s.*; an excess of 33*s.* above the average price of the six years from 1802 to 1807. In 1810 the foreign supply was very considerable: but for that supply scarcity would have become famine. In 1811 and 1812 there was a virtual exclusion of foreign supply. For four of these years of high prices

History of Prices,
vol. i. p. 43.

Eton Tables.

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out of the six the agricultural interest had the exclusive advantage of the rise of price, far advanced above the degree of defect. That was the period, within the recollection of many of us, when every acre of land was eagerly bought up; when the enclosure of wastes went on to an excess that had very slight regard to the quality of the land enclosed; when the cultivation of wheat was forced to an extent that had no reference to the exhaustion of the soil, or the necessities of economical husbandry; when rents were raised twofold and often threefold above the rents of 1792; when the race of small careful farmers vanished from the earth, and gave place to a legion of the most luxurious and insolent of all the class of getters of sudden wealth; when the whole business of cultivation was an affair of grasping ignorance—a scramble for excessive gains, in which the landowners eagerly participated; when the system of bread allowances in aid of wages was made the instrument of debasing the labourer into a predial slave, and the poor-rates, heavy as they were, operated as a positive bounty to the agriculturists, by enabling them to feed their own labourers out of their own produce, thus raising, by improvident consumption, the price of bread on all the non-agricultural population, and leaving to the agricultural population no surplus for the minor necessities of life. This was the period when, according to Mr. Western, “agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state.” In 1814 there was the fear of peace and the fear of abundance, to come across the dreams that this state of things would last for ever. When the overpowering landed interest in 1814 and 1815 demanded a new Corn Law of Parliament, prices had fallen to the average of the years from 1802 to 1807. In 1816, when the cry of “distress” was at its height—when it was proclaimed that the universal bankruptcy of the cultivators was at hand—that no rents could be paid—that the soil of England would go out of cultivation—no one in Parliament uttered the undoubted truth, that the years of agricultural prosperity had been years of suffering and depression to all other classes of the community;—that the reckless prodigality of the cultivators, and their false ambition to win a higher social position than their forefathers, not by their prudence and intelligence, but by their ostentation,—that the lavish and unprofitable expenditure of farming capital, in connexion with excessive rents, had mainly led to the insolvencies and executions for debt, which were paraded as evidences of national decay;—that the good soils unnaturally exhausted, and the poor soils unnaturally broken up, must go out of cultivation under a more healthy and less artificial system;—that the exclusion of foreign supply had forced the growth of wheat to the injury of truly productive cultivation, and that the boasted agricultural improvements were really little more than an extension of the surface under tillage, to the neglect of scientific husbandry, which the farmers of that day ridiculed, and the abandonment of the minor economies out of which their predecessors had made their chief profits. The great crop of 1813, which left a surplus produce for two or three years, came as the natural corrective for this really evil condition of society. The remedy was a severe one, and we may commiserate the individual suffering of the transition state. We may even consider that the Corn Law of 1815, as a merely temporary measure, did something not unproductive of general benefit to break the fall of the agricultural interests. But when, in a course of struggle after struggle, it was sought to perpetuate the principles of that law,—the

principles which formed the creed of the landowners of 1816,—“ that excessive taxation renders it necessary to give protection to all articles, the produce of our own soil, against similar articles, the growth of foreign countries,”—it was time to consider what were the interests of a class, and what were the interests of a nation. That consideration came tardily upon the most enlightened and disinterested of the Government and the Legislature. But it did come; and it has constituted the great rallying-point of the commercial and manufacturing interests—whose power, whether of union, or wealth, or intelligence, has been growing year by year, and making proselytes slowly and surely with the progress of that general spread of knowledge compared with which all mere party bonds are but ropes of sand.

1816.

The Resolutions of Mr. Western in 1816 came to no practical result; for the chief reason, that the forced abandonment of the Property Tax, and the voluntary relinquishment of the war malt-duty, had really left very little within the reach of Government to be offered as a further boon to the landed interest. When they demanded that foreign corn should be no longer warehoused duty free, it was manifest that they utterly set at nought every possible precaution against a season of dearth. Their relief was to be attained at all hazards by the most absolute and unconditional monopoly. The bonded corn could not be let out of warehouse till the home price had reached 80s.; but that was not enough. When the hour of dearth should arrive, we were at once to scatter our emissaries over the face of the earth, to buy corn at any price, and by the sudden demand to raise the foreign market to the level of the home market, so that the “flourishing and prosperous period” of agriculture might be secured beyond all hazard of the interruption to be produced by commercial foresight. But this was not all. Rape-seed and linseed of the growth of foreign soils were to be prohibited; tallow, cheese, and butter were proposed to be shut out. The Ministers smiled a negative upon the most presumptuous of these demands, “afraid that we had already gone quite as far as policy would admit in our system of prohibitions, if not indeed too far; and we should be particularly cautious how we advanced still further into the system.” The legislative exhibition of the wisdom that shouted for unconditional protection may be summed up in one short and emphatic speech: “The strength, the virtue, and the happiness of the people mainly depended on the prosperity of the agriculture of the country; and on this principle *the country should be forced to feed its own population*. No partial advantage to be derived from commerce could compensate for any deficiency in this respect. The true principle of national prosperity was, an absolute prohibition of the importation of foreign agricultural produce, except in extreme cases.”

Mr. Robinson.
Hansard, vol.
xxxiii. p. 698.

Mr. Barham:
Ibid.

“Manufactures and commerce,” said the speech of the Prince Regent, “are in a flourishing condition.” This was to rely upon the bare figures of Custom House returns. In 1815 the declared value of British and Irish produce and manufactures exported was fifty-one millions, being six millions more than in 1814. Well might the commerce of the country seem to be flourishing. Those who knew the real workings of that commerce were not so deceived. Mr. Baring, on the second night of the session, declared that “he saw more loss than gain in this great increase of export.” When the destruction of the power of Napoleon in 1814 had opened the ports of the Continent to our vessels—when

MANUFACTURES
AND COMMERCE.

1816.

Tooke's History
of Prices, vol. ii.
p. 8.

Brougham's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 519.

the consumption of our exports no longer depended upon a vast system of contraband trade—it was universally thought that there could be no limit to the demand for British manufactures and colonial produce. If, under the anti-commercial decrees of our great enemy, the shipments to European ports had been twelve millions in 1811, why should they not be doubled in 1814? And accordingly they were doubled. The most extravagant profits were expected to be realised. The ordinary course of trade was forsaken, and small capitalists as well as large, at the outports as well as in London, eagerly bought up colonial produce, and looked for golden returns. “The shippers found to their cost when it was too late, that the effective demand on the Continent for colonial produce and British manufactures had been greatly overrated; for whatever might be the desire of the foreign consumers to possess articles so long out of their reach, they were limited in their means of purchase; and accordingly, the bulk of the commodities exported brought very inadequate returns.” Mr. Brougham in 1816 correctly described the result of these exportations: “The bubble soon burst, like its predecessors of the South Sea, the Mississippi, and Buenos Ayres. English goods were selling for much less in Holland and the north of Europe than in London and Manchester; in most places they were lying a dead weight without any sale at all; and either no returns whatever were received, or pounds came back for thousands that had gone forth.” A very slight consideration will explain the causes of this enormous mistake. In the first place, the Continent was wholly exhausted by the long course of war—by the prodigious expenditure of capital that the war had demanded—by the wasteful consumption of mighty armies embattled against the oppressor—by the rapine of the predatory hordes that were let loose upon their soil—by confiscation. The people had necessarily the greatest difficulty to maintain life; they had little to spare for the secondary necessities—nothing for indulgence. The merchants of our own country—the nation in general—had been so accustomed to the outward indications of prosperity at home during the course of the war, that they had no adequate idea that war was the great destroyer of capital, and that it essentially left all mankind poorer. In the second place, what had the Continent to give us in exchange for our coffee and our sugar, our calicoes and our cutlery? The old mercantile school still existed amongst us, who thought that the perfection of commerce was to exchange goods for money, and that a great commercial nation might subsist without barter. But the Continent had no money to exchange for English products, even if the exploded theories of the balance of trade could have found any realization. The Continent, exhausted as it was, had its native commodities; but those we refused. France had her wines, but we resolved, in the spirit of the most high-flown patriotism, not to receive them upon equal terms with those of Portugal; the Baltic had its timber, but we determined to build our houses with the inferior growth of our North American colonies; the entire north of Europe would have applied itself to raising a surplus produce of corn for our increasing non-agricultural population, but the Corn Law of 1815 forbade the calling forth of the natural resources of the whole earth to remedy the miseries of occasional local scarcity; Holland and Belgium had their cheese and butter to supply the insufficient dairy produce of these islands, but new prohibitory duties were imposed, directly that we could resort to their markets. We panted for Continental trade; we

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believed that the peace would give us the marts of the whole world. But we doggedly held on in a course of commercial regulation which belonged only to the infancy of society. We perpetuated foreign restrictions and exclusions of our own manufactured produce, by persistence in a system which other nations of necessity regarded as the cause of our manufacturing superiority. We did not then know how essentially this system retarded our national progress. We listened to those who, on every side, clamoured for exclusive interests. Agriculturists and manufacturers, land-owners and ship-owners, equally shouted for protection.

The state of the American trade of 1816 was described by Mr. Brougham, after speaking of the disastrous results of the continental speculations :—" The peace with America has produced somewhat of a similar effect ; though I am very far from placing the vast exports which it occasioned upon the same footing with those to the European markets the year before ; because ultimately the Americans will pay, which the exhausted state of the Continent renders very unlikely." Let us remark that we did not prevent the Americans paying in the only way in which one great people can pay another—by the interchange of commodities which each wants, in return for commodities of which each can produce a superfluity. We shut out their corn, but we did not shut out their cotton. In 1813 we retained for consumption only fifty million pounds of cotton wool ; in 1814 only fifty-three millions ; the amount consumed of each year being less than that of 1804. The peace with America came at the end of 1814. In 1815 we consumed ninety-two million pounds ; in 1816, eighty-six million pounds ; in 1817, one hundred and sixteen million pounds ; and in 1818, one hundred and sixty-two million pounds. But we went farther with the United States in the recognition of just commercial principles than with any European nation. By the Treaty of Ghent, in 1814, both countries agreed to repeal their navigation laws, and " the ships of the two countries were placed reciprocally upon the same footing in the ports of England and the United States, and all discriminating duties chargeable upon the goods which they conveyed were mutually repealed."

Brougham's
Speeches, vol. i.
p. 519.

Porter's Progress
of the Nation.

GENERAL DE-
PRESSION OF
INDUSTRY.

The distresses of the agricultural and the commercial interests were thus coincident. The prices of agricultural produce were depressed by superabundance ; but the superabundance and the consequent low prices produced small benefit to the manufacturing consumers. The prices of manufacturing produce were depressed by the glut provided for extravagant speculation ; but the glut produced no increase in the command over the secondary necessities to the agricultural consumers. The means of purchase amongst all classes were exhausted. The capital which was to impel their profitable industry was dried up. There was " a very general depression in the prices of nearly all productions, and in the value of all fixed property, entailing a convergence of losses and failures among the agricultural, and commercial, and manufacturing, and mining, and shipping, and building interests, which marked that period as one of most extensive suffering and distress." Some proclaimed that the depression and the distress were caused, not by the exhaustion of war, but by " the transition from a state of war to a state of peace." The theory upon which this delusion was upheld was this : " The whole annual war expenditure, to the amount of not less than forty millions, was at once withdrawn from cir-

Tooke's History
of Prices, vol. ii.
p. 12.

Quarterly Re-
view, July, 1816.

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culatation. But public expenditure is like the fountain tree in the Indian paradise, which diffuses in fertilizing streams the vapours which it was created to collect and condense for the purpose of more beneficially returning and distributing them." According to this logical imagery, or imaginative logic, the capital of a nation in the pockets of its proprietors is "vapour;" it becomes a "fertilizing stream" when it condenses into taxes. It assumes that there is more demand when the capital of a country is expended by government, than when the same capital is expended by individuals. It assumes that the expenditure of capital by government, in subsidies, in the wasteful consumption of armies, in all the wear and tear of war, is more profitable than the expenditure of capital in the general objects of industry which create more capital. It assumes that the partial expenditure of capital by government in its victualling offices, is more profitable than the regular expenditure of the same capital left in the pockets of the tax-payers, to give them an additional command over the comforts and elegancies of life. One who saw through a fallacy as clearly as any person, and had no respect for the mincing phrases of the worshippers of power—William Cobbett—says of such dreams of the advantage of Government expenditure, "To hear this talk, one would suppose that Government was a very rich and generous thing, having an immense estate of its own, instead of being what it is, the collector of enormous sums drawn away from the people at large." This fallacy, as well as many others connected with the depression of industry at the close of the war, has been disproved by the long experience of peace. We now know that consumption has increased at a more rapid rate than at any period during the quarter of a century of wild profusion; that the agricultural and manufacturing production of the country has increased in the same proportion; that the real property of the nation has received the like increase; that the increase of population has been more than commensurate. We had arrived in 1816 at the highest point of war exhaustion. The peace came as the slow but sure corrective. Had the war been prolonged another three years, upon the same scale as the expenditure of 1813, 14, and 15—had one hundred and ninety-seven millions more been thrown away of the capital of the nation—it may be doubted whether sixty years of peace instead of thirty would have repaired the consequences of such an unnatural exhaustion.

Political Register,
Oct. 5, 1816.

CURRENCY.

Although the time is not arrived for presenting any details connected with the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England, it is necessary that we should very briefly notice the opinion which so generally obtained in 1816, that the depreciation of the currency during the war, and the practical return to a real standard at the period of peace, was a main if not the sole cause of the distress and embarrassment which we have described. Cobbett, in his strong and exaggerated style, puts the argument thus: "From this time [1797] there has been little besides paper-money. This became plenty; and, of course, wages and corn and everything became high in price. But, when the peace came, it was necessary to reduce the quantity of paper-money; because, when we came to have intercourse with foreign nations, it would never do to sell a one-pound note at Calais, as was the case, for about thirteen shillings. The Bank and the Government had it in their power to lessen the quantity of paper. Down came prices in a little while; and if the debt and taxes had come down

Political Register,
Nov. 30, 1816.

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too in the same degree, there would have been no material injury ; but they did not. Taxes have continued the same. Hence our ruin, the complete ruin of the great mass of farmers and tradesmen and small landlords ; and hence the misery of the people." This was published in November, 1816. The theory might be right, that the reduced amount of the currency was the main cause of the depression of prices, if the facts were here correctly stated. But the Bank of England at the peace scarcely contracted its issues at all. In August, 1813, the circulation of bank-notes was nearly twenty-five millions ; at the same season in 1814 it was twenty-eight millions ; in 1815 twenty-seven millions ; in 1816 only half a million less. The utmost amount of the depreciation of bank-notes was in 1814, when a hundred pounds of paper would only buy 74*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* of gold—a depreciation of about 25 per cent. In 1815 and 1816 a hundred pounds of paper would buy 83*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.* of gold—a depreciation of nearly 17 per cent. Thus the rise in the value of money which Cobbett, and many others of less violent politics, declared had produced the wide-spreading ruin of 1816, by causing a proportionate fall of the prices of commodities exchanged for money, was not more than 8 per cent. as compared with the period when the value of an unconvertible paper-money was at the lowest. It is no less true that a vast amount of paper-money was withdrawn from circulation at this period, by the failure of many country-banks, and the contraction of their advances by all who were stable. This was a consequence of the great fall of agricultural produce,—a consequence of the diminished credit of the producers. When the restriction upon cash payments by the Bank of England was, in 1816, agreed to be renewed for two years, the bearing of the continuance of the restriction upon the state of prices was not overlooked. An extract from Mr. Horner's speech on the 1st May, 1816, on his motion for a committee to inquire into the expediency of restoring the cash payments of the Bank of England, will supply all that is necessary at this point of our history for the elucidation of this complicated subject:—"He would ask the House, had they felt no evils from the long suspension of cash payments? Were they sensible of no evils after all that had passed in the course of the discussions of the agricultural distress, during which no one had been hardy enough to deny that a great evil had arisen from the sudden destruction of the artificial prices? Would any man say that there had not been a great change in the value of money? What this was owing to might be disputed ; but, for his own part, he had not the least doubt. From inquiries which he had made, and from the accounts on the table, he was convinced that a greater and more sudden reduction of the circulating medium had never taken place in any country than had taken place since the peace in this country, with the exception of those reductions which had happened in France after the Mississippi scheme, and after the destruction of the assignats. He should not go into the question how this reduction had been effected, though it was a very curious one, and abounded in illustrations of the principles which had been so much disputed in that House. *The reduction of the currency had originated in the previous fall of the prices of agricultural produce.* This fall had produced a destruction of the country-bank paper to an extent which would not have been thought possible without more ruin than had ensued. The Bank of England had also reduced its issues, as appeared by the accounts recently presented. The average amount of their currency was not, during the last

Hansard, vol.
xxxiv. p. 143.

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year, more than between twenty-five and twenty-six millions; while two years ago it had been nearer twenty-nine millions, and at one time even amounted to thirty-one millions. But without looking to the diminution of the Bank of England paper, the reduction of country paper was enough to account for the fall which had taken place. Another evil which had resulted from the state of the currency, which he had foreseen and predicted, but which had been deemed visionary, was, that during the war we had borrowed money, which was then of small value, and we were now obliged to pay it at a high value. This was the most formidable evil which threatened our finances; and, though he had too high an opinion of the resources of the country and of the wisdom of the government to despair, he was appalled when he considered the immense amount of the interest of the debt contracted in that artificial currency, compared with the produce of the taxes. . . . Looking forward to the operation of this restriction in time of peace, it would be found to leave us without any known or certain standard of money to regulate the transactions, not only between the public and its creditors, but between individuals. The currency which was to prevail was not only uncertain, but cruel and unjust in its operation—at one time upon those whose income was fixed in money, and to all creditors—at another time, when by some accident it was diminished in amount, to all debtors. Was not this an evil sufficient to attract the attention of a wise, a benevolent, and a prudent government? If they looked at the agricultural interest, was not a fluctuation of prices the greatest of evils to the farmer? For, supposing prices were fixed and steady, it was indifferent to him what was the standard. As long as we had no standard—no fixed value of money—but it was suffered to rise and fall like the quicksilver in the barometer, no man could conduct his property with any security, or depend upon any sure and certain profit. Persons who were aware of the importance of this subject must be surely anxious to know whether there were any imperative reasons for continuing the present system, to know whether it was intended to revert to the old system; and if not now, when that system would be reverted to, and what would be the best means for bringing about that measure.”

Here, for the present, we leave this question of the currency.

CHAPTER IV.

1816.

LABOUR.

Diplomates
Européens,
tome i. p. 426.

A French author, in one of those rapid generalizations which are characteristic of much of the modern historical writing of his country, and which, if not quite so far removed from truth as a positive falsification of facts, are as certainly deceptive, M. Capefigue, thus describes the condition of Great Britain after the peace:—"The Convention of 1815 had scarcely been signed before England saw a formidable conspiracy of Radicalism spring up in her bosom. It was not confined to a few outbreaks easily repressed, but displayed itself in masses of a hundred thousand workmen, who destroyed factories and pillaged houses. It was as if the earth trembled, ready to swallow up the old aristocracy." Let us endeavour to come somewhat nearer the truth, by tracing, through a multitude of details, the real dangers and the exaggerated alarms of this moral earthquake.

We have shown how the exhaustion of British capital, the unavoidable consequent weight of taxation, the depression of agricultural stock, the want of markets for native and colonial produce, had produced that paralysis of industry which marked the latter months of 1815 and the beginning of 1816. That these circumstances were most felt by those whose voices of complaint were least heard, by the working population, was soon made perfectly manifest. There was a surplus of labour in every department of human exertion. Mr. Brand declared in Parliament, at the end of March, speaking especially of the agricultural population, that "the poor, in many cases, abandoned their own residences. Whole parishes had been deserted; and the crowd of paupers, increasing in numbers as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation." Discharged sailors and disbanded militia-men swelled the ranks of indigence. If the unhappy wanderers crowded to the cities, they encountered bodies of workmen equally wretched, wholly deprived of work, or working at short time upon insufficient wages. But another evil, of which we find no parliamentary record, amidst debates on the prevailing distress, had come upon the land to aggravate discontent into desperation. While the landowners were demanding more protection, and passing new laws for limiting the supply of food, the heavens lowered—intense frosts prevailed in February—the spring was inclement—the temperature of the advancing summer was unusually low—and in July incessant rains and cold stormy winds completed the most ungenial season that had occurred in this country since 1799. In January the average price of wheat was 52*s.* 6*d.*; in May it was 76*s.* 4*d.* The apprehensions of a deficient crop were universal, in Germany, in France, and in the South of Europe. The result of the harvest showed that these apprehensions were not idle. The prices of grain in England rapidly rose after July; and at the end of the year rye, barley, and beans had more than doubled the average market price of the beginning; wheat had risen from 52*s.* 6*d.* to 103*s.*

"The matter of seditions is of two kinds," says Lord Bacon, "much

Hansard, vol.
xxiii. p. 671.Tooke's History
of Prices, vol. ii.
p. 14.Annual Register
1816, p. 333.

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Poverty and much Discontentment.” Both causes were fully operating in Great Britain in 1816. The Seditions of absolute Poverty—“the rebellions of the belly,” as the same great thinker writes—were the first to manifest themselves. Early in May, symptoms of insubordination and desperate violence were displayed amongst the agricultural population of the eastern counties. Legislators had been accustomed to look with alarm at the organised outbreaks of large bodies of workmen in the manufacturing districts, as in 1812; but insurrectionary movements of the peasantry, ignorant, scattered, accustomed to the dole of forced benevolence, and therefore broken in spirit, were scarcely to be heeded. And yet these “poor dumb mouths” made themselves audible. They combined in the destruction of property with a fierce recklessness that startled those who saw no danger but in the violence of dense populations, and who were constantly proclaiming that the nation which builds on manufactures sleeps upon gunpowder. In Suffolk nightly fires of incendiaries began to blaze in every district; threshing machines were broken or burnt in open day; mills were attacked. At Brandon, near Bury, large bodies of labourers assembled to prescribe a maximum price of grain and meat, and to pull down the houses of butchers and bakers. They bore flags, with the motto “Bread or Blood.” At Bury and at Norwich disturbances of a similar nature were quickly repressed. But the most serious demonstration of the spirit of the peasantry arose in what is called “the Isle of Ely,”—that isolated fen-country which is cultivated by a population of primitive habits—a daring and active population, with much of the dogged reliance upon brute force which characterised their Saxon forefathers. Early in the Session, Mr. Western described the agricultural distress of this district as exceeding that of most other parts of the kingdom. Executions upon the property of the cultivators, distresses for rent, insolvencies, farms untenanted, were the symptoms of this remarkable depression. When we regard the peculiar character of this portion of the country, we may easily understand how a great fall in the prices of grain had driven the land out of cultivation, and cast off the labour of the peasantry, to be as noxious in its stagnation as the overcharged waters of that artificially fertile region. That country was then very imperfectly drained; and the rates for the imperfect drainage being unpaid by many tenants, the destructive agencies of nature were more active than the healing and directing energies of man. It is well known, too, that in the fen countries the temptation of immediate profit had more than commonly led the farmer to raise exhausting crops, and that the nature of the land under such circumstances is such that a more provident tillage, and abundant manure, cannot for a long time restore it. The high prices of wheat from 1810 to 1814 had supplied this temptation. The Isle of Ely in 1816 had become somewhat like Prospero’s isle, where there was “everything advantageous to life, save means to live.” It was under such circumstances that, on the 22nd of May, a great body of insurgent fenmen assembled at Littleport, a small town on the river Lark. They commenced their riotous proceedings by a night attack on the house of a magistrate. They broke into shops, emptied the cellars of public-houses, and finally marched to Ely, where they continued their lawless course of drunkenness and plunder. For two days and nights these scenes of violence did not cease; and the parish of Littleport was described as resembling a town sacked by a besieging army, the

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principal inhabitants having been compelled to abandon their houses in terror of their lives, leaving their property to the fury of this fearful band of desperate men. There could, of necessity, be but one termination. The military were called in, and a sort of skirmish ensued, in which blood flowed on both sides. A large number of the rioters were finally lodged in Ely gaol. Then came the sure retribution of the offended laws. A Special Commission was issued for the trial of the culprits. Thirty-four persons were convicted and sentenced to death, on charges of burglary and robbery, of whom five were executed. In pronouncing sentence upon these unhappy men, Mr. Justice Abbot said, "It was suggested abroad, that you had been induced to perpetrate these violent outrages by hard necessity and want; but after attending closely and strictly to the whole tenor of the evidence, there has not appeared in the condition, circumstances, or behaviour of any one of you, any reason to suppose that you were instigated by distress." And yet great distress might have existed in the general population, without the wretched leaders in these riots being especially distressed, for several of those who underwent the capital punishment were persons above the condition of labourers. It is difficult to believe that the distress of the landowners and tenants should have been greater in the Isle of Ely than in most other parts of the kingdom, and that the labourers should not have been impelled to outrage by "hard necessity and want."

Incendiary fires, attempts at plunder, riots put down by military force, spread alarm through districts chiefly agricultural. The distress which had fallen upon the manufacturing and other non-agricultural portions of the population was manifested in many signal ways. At the beginning of July, a body of colliers, thrown out of employment by the stoppage of iron-works at Bilston, took the singular resolution of setting out to London, for the purpose of submitting their distresses in a petition to the Prince Regent, and presenting him with two waggons of coals, which they drew along with them. One party advanced as far as St. Alban's, and another reached Maidenhead Thicket. The Home Office took the precaution of sending a strong body of police, with magistrates, from London, to meet these poor fellows, and induce them to return; and they were successful. The men, who had conducted themselves with the most perfect order, were satisfied to depart homewards, having been paid for their coals, and accepting also some charitable contribution. They bore a placard, "Willing to work, but none of us to beg;" and they required certificates from the magistrates that they had conducted themselves with propriety. Their example was followed by other unemployed colliers from Staffordshire, who yoked themselves in a similar way to loaded waggons. But their progress towards London was not very considerable. The distresses of the workmen in the iron-trade were quite appalling. Utter desolation prevailed in districts where iron-works had been suspended. The workmen in these districts used to be surrounded with many comforts. They had saved a little money. The factories were shut up; the furnaces blown out; the coal-pits closed. Then the neat cottages, where hundreds of families had lived in comfort, were gradually stripped of every article of furniture; the doors of these once cheerful dwellings were barred; the families were wandering about the country, seeking for that relief from private charity which the parishes could not supply them. Depredation was very rare. Later in the year, the miners and colliers connected with

COAL DISTRICTS.

Letter in Annual Register, 1816.

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the great iron-works in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, assembled in a tumultuous manner, and their numbers gradually swelling till they reached ten or twelve thousand, they finally extinguished the blast at several works, but did little other damage. These men were on very reduced wages; but their distress does not seem to have been nearly so great as the utter destitution of the Staffordshire colliers.

MACHINE-
BREAKING.

Hansard, vol.
xvi. p. 809.
Mr. Secretary
Ryder.

In the year 1812 an Act was passed "for the more exemplary punishment of persons destroying or injuring any stocking or lace frames, or other machines or engines used in the frame-work knitting manufactory, or any articles or goods in such frames or machines." The object of the Act was to make the offence capital. The cause for this increase to the fearful list of offences to which the penalty of death was attached, was the system of riot and destruction, bordering on insurrection, which had prevailed in Nottingham and the adjacent counties for more than three months. There never before was such an organized system of havoc resorted to by men who were at once grossly ignorant and pre-eminently crafty. "The depredations had been carried on with a greater degree of secrecy and management than had ever been known in any similar proceedings; so much so, that the magistrates could not take upon themselves to apprehend the persons whom they suspected of having committed the outrages. It was peculiarly easy for parties who were ill-disposed, to perpetrate those illegal acts; for, in many instances, the machinery was used in isolated houses, which were far from any neighbourhood, and persons having secreted themselves about the premises, felt no difficulty in destroying the frames, which could be performed with very little noise. In one instance, the mischief had been done actually in sight of the military; and in another, they were not more than one hundred yards from the premises. The rioters had also occasionally gone to the villages in bodies of about fifty men, and having stationed sentinels at the different avenues, the remainder employed themselves in destroying all the frames; and this was executed with so much secrecy, that not a trace of the parties was left in the course of a few minutes." Such was the character of the Luddite insurrection of 1812. In spite of the increase of punishment, the system was never wholly put down. In 1816 it broke forth with new violence. At Loughborough, in July, many frames employed in the manufacture of lace were destroyed with the same secrecy as in 1812. Armed bands, under the command of a chief, held the inhabitants in nightly terror, commanding them to put out their lights, and keep within their houses, under penalty of death. Their ravages were not confined to the towns: they would march with suddenness and secrecy to distant villages, and rapidly effect their purposes of destruction. The General Ludd, who led on these armed and disguised desperadoes, would address his forces in a short speech, divide them into parties, and assign their respective operations. Then, in the silence of night, would houses and factories be broken open, frames and other machines demolished, unfinished work scattered on the highways, furniture be wholly destroyed. The ignorance which has more or less prevailed at all times on the subject of machinery—coupled with the want of employment produced by the depression of every branch of industry—was the cause that, undeterred by the terrible penalties of the law, the Luddites still pursued the course which had well nigh driven the lace-manufacture from their district, and converted temporary into permanent

ruin. The futility of the legislation of 1812 was well exposed in a Protest of Lords Lauderdale and Rosslyn on the introduction of the Bill: "We agree in the opinion so generally expressed in this House, that the conduct of the manufacturers, in destroying frames and other machinery used in our manufactures, must proceed from mistaken views of their own interest, as they, more than any other class of his Majesty's subjects, are deeply interested in the preservation of machinery, to the improvement of which we owe our existence as a manufacturing country. But we think it our duty, strongly and in distinct terms, to reprobate the unprecedented folly of attempting to enlighten the minds of men in regard to what is beneficial for themselves, by increased severity of punishment; whilst every sound principle of criminal legislation makes us regard such an addition to the long list of offences already subjected to capital punishment by the laws of this country, with astonishment and disgust; and every feeling of humanity leads us to express the utmost horror at the wanton cruelty of punishing our fellow-creatures with death for those culpable acts, more injurious to themselves than to any other part of the community, to which, through mistaken views of policy, the increasing distress of the times has induced them to resort."

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Hansard, vol.
xxi. p. 1085.

The wealthier classes of this country are never wanting in the disposition to relieve the distresses of their fellow-subjects by liberal contributions. The sufferings of the poor in 1816 were too manifest not to call forth an unusual amount of public sympathy, displayed in subscriptions for relief, and in schemes for providing employment. However local charity may have mitigated the intensity of the evil arising out of the general exhaustion of capital, a calm review of the more ostentatious exertions of that period forces upon us the conclusion that such attempts are for the most part wholly inefficient—more calculated to produce a deceptive calm in the minds of those who give, than to afford any real or permanent benefit to those who receive.

PRIVATE BENE-
VOLENCE.

On the 29th July a very remarkable meeting took place at the City of London Tavern, "to take into consideration the present distressed state of the lower classes, and the most effectual means of extending relief to them." The Duke of York took the chair: the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge moved resolutions; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London also took part in the proceedings, as well as several peers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Wilberforce. This meeting for purposes of holy charity was converted into a political brawl. It was a time of brawlers; but the rude energy and the bad taste of much of the declamation that disturbed the quiet of public meetings was not wholly removed from strong sense and unanswerable reasoning. Lord Cochrane, on this occasion, compelled the alteration of a Resolution which declared "That the transition from an extensive warfare to a system of peace has occasioned a stagnation of employment and a revulsion of trade." The promoters of the meeting consented to affirm the fact, without setting up a delusive cause. The Duke of Kent, who moved the first resolution, said, "if *they* should be so happy as but to succeed in discovering new sources of employment, to supply the place of those channels which had been suddenly shut up, he should indeed despond if we did not soon restore the country to that same flourishing condition which had long made her the envy of the world." The goodness of the intention could only be exceeded by the

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absurdity of the means. Here was a body of the great and wealthy coming forward to subscribe some forty or fifty thousand, perhaps even a hundred thousand pounds, not merely to give away as bread and soup to two or three millions of suffering labourers and their families, but to find, out of this fifty or a hundred thousand pounds capital, new sources of employment, which the millions of capital that were devoted to the ordinary courses of industry would have instantly created if such new employments could have been profitably exercised. The new employment was, of course, to be unprofitable; it could afford no returns to produce continued employment. The promoters of this meeting themselves saw something of the fallacy, and talked of the inadequacy of their means to relieve national distress. The persons who disturbed the usual placid and complimentary course of such proceedings, clamoured for remission of taxation, reduced expenditure, abolition of sinecures. Upon this subject the chief organ of Government thus expressed the opinions of the wealthier classes:—"Such numerous bodies of men having been thrown out of employ, every good man perceived the necessity of affording them temporary relief, and the propriety of relieving the poor-rates by voluntary aid, till alternative measures of permanent policy could be devised and brought into action for gradually removing a burthen that was becoming intolerable." According to this authority, the subscriptions did not add to the fund for the relief of distress;—they were in aid of the poor-rates, and not in addition to them. The poor-rates in 1816 were half a million less than in 1814; the price of bread was higher; the population was increased; and the number of quarters of wheat for which the money raised by poor-rate could have been exchanged, was two hundred and forty thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1814, and two hundred thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1815. To put the efficiency of the poor-rates upon the same level in 1816 as they were in 1814, by the aid of voluntary subscriptions, the Committee of the London Tavern ought to have raised as much money as would have purchased two hundred and fifty thousand quarters of wheat, which at the time of this great meeting would have cost more than a million sterling. We mention these facts, not to make ourselves obnoxious to the reproof then levelled against the Reformers, that they realized the old story of the Needy Knife-grinder and the Friend of Humanity, but to point out the folly of deceiving our own consciences as to the power of alms-giving to afford adequate relief in great periods of national distress. The first duty of the capitalist is to understand what are the real claims of labour under ordinary circumstances, and what the amount of assistance that can be rendered under extraordinary contingencies. It is the duty of Government so to shape its policy that the necessary inequalities of demand and supply shall not be rendered more oppressive by false legislation. All contention for interests of classes or individuals,—all blindness to the dreadful calamity of an unemployed, inadequately paid, starving, and therefore dangerous population,—are best exhibited in their fatal consequences, when it is seen how totally incompetent is the heartiest exercise of private benevolence to remedy great public suffering. The economical mistakes of such private benevolence would be matters of ridicule if they were not so awful in their delusions. In 1816, hand corn-mills were recommended for the employment of the poor, to supersede the labour of the miller; and women and even men were actually

Quarterly Review,
July, 1816.

See Porter's Pro-
gress of the Na-
tion, vol. i. p. 82.

Quarterly Review,
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employed to shell beans in the fields, to supersede the more efficient labour of the thrasher. Minor schemes were recommended in London, and published to the world authoritatively, as remedies for the absence of profitable employment. Of these the most notable were the making of cordage out of hop-bines and weeds; the gathering of rushes to manufacture candles from the grease-pot; the platting of baskets out of flags; and the mixture of fire-balls out of clay and cinders, to supersede coals. It is perfectly clear that if these employments could be found profitable by the sale of the articles produced, the regular employment in rope-making, or candle-making, or basket-making, or coal-mining, would have been diminished. Even the soup kitchens, which in 1816 were set up through the country, to avert starvation, had their evils. The recipients of the benevolence were discontented with its limited amount. At Glasgow some imaginary insult offered by a dole of the soup to the more unfortunate of that large community, stung the people to madness: the soup kitchen, with its coppers and ladles, was destroyed; the outrage swelled to riot; the military were called in; and for two days the populous city was exposed to a contest between the soldiers and the mob. At Dundee the people relieved themselves in the old summary way of plunder: a hundred shops were ransacked.

CHAPTER V.

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PARLIAMENTARY
REFORM.

LORD BACON, discoursing of the second cause of sedition, "Discontentments," says, "There is in every state, as we know, two portions of subjects, the Noblesse and the Commonalty. When one of these is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion, if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of small strength, except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves." We at once perceive that the experience of Lord Bacon was limited to a totally different state of society than that of modern England. On one hand was "the noblesse," "the greater sort"—the makers of laws, the exclusive possessors of power; on the other, "the commonalty"—"the common people," "the multitude"—strong in union, feeble in individuality. It required a century and a half to constitute an efficient third class—the middle class—the *bourgeoisie* of the French. The commonalty was then cut into two sections—the most influential of the two standing between the higher class and the lower class. The term "lower class," or "lower classes," is gone out of use. The term is thought not complimentary to the democracy, and so we say "the working class," which is less precise, and conveys false notions. The union which Lord Bacon exhibited as the most fearful to the sovereign power, was that which sprang from the common discontent of the nobles and the people. A monarch, according to the great imaginative philosopher, should be the Jupiter whom Pallas counselled to call Briareus with his hundred arms to his aid. Sure of the good will of the common people he was safe. We see how all this consists with the government of the Tudors and the first Stuart; how strictly it represents the attributes of an imperfect civilization; how much remained to be developed before the more favoured of fortune, the more complete in education and intelligence of "the commonalty," could be raised up into a new class. The far grander problem of the full development of the class lowest in point of wealth and power—of the class highest in point of numbers—of the most truly important class with reference to the happiness and safety of modern societies—this problem is little advanced toward solution in our own day. It scarcely formed an element in the habitual consideration of a legislator thirty years ago. And yet the agitation of this class convulsed our whole social system at that period. Those struggles were, in truth, the first moving forces of the great changes which have since taken place in the political position of the class next above the masses; and, as a natural consequence, indirectly in their own position.

Up to the close of 1816 the spirit of Parliamentary Reform was seldom evoked in the British Parliament. When the spirit was occasionally raised, upon the presentation of some stray petition, it had no alarms for the most timid, and very few consolations for the most ardent. It was a good quiet spirit "in the cellarage"—an "old mole"—that called out, in antiquated phrase, about Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; and the House of Commons

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listened as to some gabble which concerned it not, and went on with its proper work of Whig and Tory fence, conducted upon the most approved principles of the first masters of the science. But the "worthy pioneer" got above ground in 1816, and, when he was fairly loosened to the open sky, he was not quite so tame, and innocent and stupid a spirit as his ordinary supporters and his systematic revilers had been in the habit of believing him to be.

The House of Commons was not generally popular in 1816. We have better evidence for the fact than that of the pamphleteering or oratorical champions of Reform. Mr. Hallam, a calm, constitutional Whig of that day, rejoices over the defeat of the Ministry on the Property Tax, chiefly because that decision had removed "the danger of increasing the odium under which the House of Commons already labours among a large class of people, by so decidedly resisting the wishes of the nation." And yet the call for Parliamentary Reform seems to have made itself very feebly heard in the Lower House at this period. With the exception of some four or five petitions that produced very slight discussion, it would scarcely be thought, from an inspection of the Parliamentary Debates, that such a question agitated any part of the nation at all. On one occasion, in June, some members spoke very briefly upon the subject. One complained of the apathy with which the question was regarded in England; another (Mr. Brougham) mentioned the cause as "opposed by some, deserted by others, and espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors." But from this time the name of Parliamentary Reform became, for the most part, a name of terror to the Government—to the elevated by rank and wealth—to the most influential of the middle classes. It became fearful from the causes which would have made it contemptible in ordinary times. It was "espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors." It passed away from the patronage of a few aristocratic lovers of popularity, to be advocated by writers of "twopenny trash," and to be discussed and organized by "Hampden Clubs" of hungering philanthropists and unemployed "weaver-boys."

Horner's Life,
vol. ii. p. 318.

Hansard, vol.
xxxiv. p. 1146.

Let us hear the evidence upon this matter of a remarkable man—a man of real native talent, and, like a very large number of his class, of honest intentions:

"At this time [1816] the writings of William Cobbett suddenly became of great authority; they were read on nearly every cottage-hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, in those of Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham; also in many of the Scottish manufacturing towns. Their influence was speedily visible; he directed his readers to the true cause of their sufferings—misgovernment; and to its proper corrective—parliamentary reform. Riots soon became scarce, and from that time they have never obtained their ancient vogue with the labourers of this country.

Passages in the
Life of a Radical,
by Samuel
Hamford, vol. i.
p. 8.

"Let us not descend to be unjust. Let us not withhold the homage which, with all the faults of William Cobbett, is still due to his great name.

"Instead of riots and destruction of property, Hampden Clubs were now established in many of our large towns, and the villages and districts around them; Cobbett's books were printed in a cheap form; the labourers read them, and thenceforward became deliberate and systematic in their proceedings. Nor were there wanting men of their own class to encourage and direct the new converts; the Sunday-schools of the preceding thirty years had produced many working-men of sufficient talent to become readers, writers, and speakers in

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the village meetings for parliamentary reform ; some also were found to possess a rude poetic talent, which rendered their effusions popular, and bestowed an additional charm on their assemblages ; and by such various means, anxious listeners at first, and then zealous proselytes, were drawn from the cottages of quiet nooks and dingles, to the weekly readings and discussions of the Hampden Clubs."

Cobbett himself, on the 21st December, 1816, wrote as follows :—

Political Register,
vol. xxxi. p. 799.

"The country, instead of being disturbed, as the truly seditious writers on the side of Corruption would fain make us believe ; instead of being 'irritated' by the agitation of the question of Reform, is kept by the hope, which Reform holds out to it, in a state of tranquillity, wholly unparalleled in the history of the world, under a similar pressure of suffering. Of this fact the sad scenes at Dundee are a strong and remarkable instance. At the great and populous towns of Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, and many, many others, where the people are suffering in a degree that makes the heart sick within one to think of, they have had their meetings to petition for Reform ; they have agreed on petitions ; hope has been left in their bosoms ; they have been inspired with patience and fortitude ; and all is tranquil. But, at Dundee, where a partial meeting had been held early in November, and where a gentleman who moved for Reform had been borne down, there violence has broken forth, houses have been plundered, and property and life exposed to all sort of perils, and this, too, amongst the sober, the sedate, the reflecting, the prudent, the moral people of Scotland."

WRITINGS OF
COBBETT.

The writings of William Cobbett, at this critical period, are certainly amongst the most valuable of the materials for a correct view of the disturbing elements of our social system, and of the circumstances which led to the subsequent repressive policy of the Government. Up to the 2nd November, 1816, 'Cobbett's Weekly Political Register' was a publication not addressed to the "cottage hearth," but to persons who could afford to pay a shilling and a halfpenny weekly, for a single octavo stamped sheet, printed in open type. His writings, singularly clear and argumentative, strong in personalities, earnest, bold, never halting between two opinions, powerful beyond all anonymous writing from their rare individuality, would have commanded an extensive influence under any form of publication. But on the 2nd November, when the entire sheet was devoted to an address "To the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Scotland, and Ireland," Cobbett added this announcement : "This Address, printed upon an open sheet, will be sold by the publisher at 2*d.* each, and for 12*s.* 6*d.* a hundred, if a hundred are taken together." On the 16th November he wrote thus : "The Register, No. 18, which was reprinted on an open sheet, to be sold for 2*d.* by retail, having been found to be very useful, it is my intention to continue that mode of proceeding until the meeting of Parliament, or, perhaps, until the Reform shall have actually taken place. . . . Now, events are pressing upon us so fast, that my Register, loaded with more than half its amount in stamp, and other expenses incidental to the stamp, does not move about sufficiently swift to do all the good that it might do. I have therefore resolved to make it move swifter." He goes on to say that the stamped Register was "read in meetings of people in many towns, and one copy was thus made to convey information to scores of persons ;" but that he finds in public-houses, "the landlords have objected to meetings for reading the Register

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being held at their houses, for fear they should lose their licences." He accordingly prints the twopenny Register. We see, therefore, why, at the end of 1816, "the writings of William Cobbett *suddenly* became of great authority, and were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts." Never before had any single writer in England wielded such a power. The success of this experiment upon the influence to be produced by cheap publications was such as to lead him to reprint some of the more exciting of his previous Registers. That they gave the discontent of the labouring classes a new direction cannot be doubted; that they did much to repress riot and outrage may fairly be conceded. His "Letter to the Luddites," on the 30th November, is a master-piece of reasoning against the ignorant hostility to machinery, and must have been far more effectual than a regiment of dragoons. But that they were scattering the seeds of a greater danger than the outrage and plunder of infuriated mobs cannot be denied. Their object was suddenly to raise up the great masses of labourers and mechanics into active politicians; to render the most impatient and uncontrollable materials of our social system the most preponderating,—hitherto as powerless alone as the "commonalty" of Bacon, without the leading of the "greater sort." The danger was evident; the means of repression were not so clear. The effect of Cobbett's writings may be estimated by the violence of his opponents, as well as the admiration of his disciples. From the date of his twopenny Registers he was stigmatized as a "firebrand,"—"a convicted incendiary." "Why is it that this convicted incendiary, and others of the same stamp, are permitted, week after week, to sow the seeds of rebellion, insulting the Government, and defying the laws of the country? . . . We have laws to prevent the exposure of unwholesome meat in our markets, and the mixture of deleterious drugs in beer. We have laws also against poisoning the minds of the people, by exciting discontent and disaffection; why are not these laws rendered effectual, and enforced as well as the former?" The answer is very obvious. The laws, as they stood at the end of 1816, when this was written, could not touch William Cobbett. He knew well how to manage his strength. He risked no libels. He dealt with general subjects. He called upon the people to assemble and to petition. He exhorted the people against the use of force. He sowed the dragon's teeth, it is true, but they did not rise up as armed men. They rose up in the far more dangerous apparition of the masses, without property, without education, without leaders of any weight or responsibility, demanding the supreme legislative power—the power of universal suffrage. The idea ceased to be a theory—it became a tremendous reality.

Quarterly Review, vol. xvi. p. 275.

In the Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, presented on the 19th February, 1817, the Hampden Clubs are thus described:—

HAMPDEN CLUBS.

"The first thing which has here forced itself upon their observation is the widely diffused ramification of a system of clubs, associated professedly for the purpose of Parliamentary Reform, upon the most extended principle of universal suffrage and annual Parliaments. These clubs in general designate themselves by the same name of Hampden Clubs. On the professed object of their institution, they appear to be in communication and connexion with the club of that name in London.

Hansard, vol. xxxv. p. 443.

"It appears to be part of the system of these clubs to promote an extension of clubs of the same name and nature, so widely as, if possible, to include every

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village in the kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of publications likely to promote their object. Petitions, ready prepared, have been sent down from the metropolis to all societies in the country disposed to receive them. The communication between these clubs takes place by the mission of delegates; delegates from these clubs in the country have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March. Whatever may be the real objects of these clubs in general, your Committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of artisans, nothing short of a Revolution is the object expected and avowed."

The clear and honest testimony of Samuel Bamford shows that, in this early period of their history, the Hampden Clubs limited their object to the attainment of Parliamentary Reform—a sweeping reform, indeed, but not what is understood by the term "Revolution." Bamford was secretary to one of these clubs, established at Middleton in 1816. The members contributed each a penny a week; their numbers increased; and they held their meetings in a chapel which had been previously occupied by a society of Methodists. They were called "Reformers,"—not Radical Reformers, but simply Reformers. Meetings of delegates from other districts were held in this chapel; and on the 16th December, 1816, they resolved to send out missionaries to disseminate the principles of Reform. On the 1st January, 1817, a meeting of delegates from twenty-one petitioning bodies was held at the Middleton Chapel, when resolutions were passed, declaratory of the right of every male, above eighteen years of age, and who paid taxes, to vote for the election of Members of Parliament; and that Parliaments should be elected annually. "Such," he adds, "were the moderate views and wishes of the Reformers of those days, as compared with the present. . . . Some of the nostrum-mongers of the present day would have been made short work of by the Reformers of that time; they would not have been tolerated for more than one speech, but handed over to the civil power. It was not until we became infested by spies, incendiaries, and their dupes,—distracting, misleading, and betraying,—that physical force was mentioned amongst us. After that, our moral power waned; and what we gained by the accession of demagogues we lost by their criminal violence, and the estrangement of real friends." It would appear, however, that in Scotland, at a very early stage of the proceedings of Reform Clubs, that is in December, 1816, the mode in which large masses of men ordinarily look for the accomplishment of political changes was not so cautiously kept out of view. In the proceedings in the High Court of Justiciary, in Edinburgh, early in 1817, against two persons for administering unlawful oaths, the obligation of the members of these Reform Clubs was shown to run thus:—"I do voluntarily swear that I will persevere in my endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection amongst Britons of every description, who are considered worthy of confidence; and that I will persevere in my endeavours to obtain for all the people in Great Britain and Ireland, not disqualified by crimes or insanity, the elective franchise, at the age of twenty-one, with free and equal representation and annual Parliaments; and that I will support the same to the utmost of my power, *either by moral or physical strength, as the case may require*: and I do further

Passages in the
Life of a Radical,
vol. i. chap. ii.

State Trials, vol.
xxxiii. p. 147.

swear, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments, shall induce me to inform on, or give evidence against, any member or members, collectively or individually, for any act or expression done or made, in or out, in this or similar societies, under the punishment of death, to be inflicted on me by any member or members of such societies."

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Of the Hampden Club of London, Sir Francis Burdett was the Chairman. Vanity, as well as misery, "makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows." Bamford, at the beginning of 1817, came to London as a delegate from the Middleton Club, to attend a great meeting of delegates to be assembled in London. The Crown and Anchor Tavern was the scene of these deliberations. There was Major Cartwright in the Chair—a placid enthusiast, sincere in his belief that unmingled good would be the result of the great experiment which he had so long advocated. His chief supporters were Cobbett, with his shrewd self-possession and "bantering jollity;" and Hunt—"orator Hunt," as he was called—the incarnation of an empty, blustering, restless, ignorant, and selfish demagogue. The great Baronet was absent, and his absence provoked no little comment. But he was accessible in his own mansion; and the hard-handed delegates had an interview with this "imp of fame," in his dressing-gown and white cotton stockings hanging about his long spare legs, with a "manner dignified and civilly familiar; submitting to, rather than seeking conversation with, men of our class." Samuel Bamford was awe-struck by the passionate bellowing of Hunt, frozen by the proud condescension of Sir Francis Burdett, but charmed by the unaffected cordiality of Lord Cochrane. These were the chief actors in the procession scenes of the popular drama that was then under rehearsal. Other and more important parts were filled quite as appropriately. The graphic descriptions of a poor delegate weaver, who saw the secret workings of this drama, are as much matter of real history as the debates of senators and the reports of secret committees: "Several times I attended meetings of trades' clubs, and other public assemblages of the working-men. They would generally be found in a large room, an elevated seat being placed for the chairman. On first opening the door, the place seemed dimmed by a suffocating vapour of tobacco curling from the cups of long pipes, and issuing from the mouths of the smokers, in clouds of abominable odour, like nothing in the world more than one of the unclean fogs of their streets (though the latter were certainly less offensive), and probably less hurtful. Every man would have his half-pint of porter before him; many would be speaking at once, and the hum and confusion would be such as gave an idea of there being more talkers than thinkers—more speakers than listeners. Presently, 'Order!' would be called, and comparative silence would ensue; a speaker, stranger or citizen, would be announced with much courtesy and compliment; 'Hear, hear, hear!' would follow, with clapping of hands, and knocking of knuckles on the tables till the half-pints danced; then a speech, with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of Parliamentary Reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some minor point would follow; a seconding of that; a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament; half a dozen would rise to set him right; a dozen to put them down; and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding. The door opens, and two persons of middle stature enter; the uproar is changed to applause, and a round of huzzas welcome the new-comers.

Bamford, vol. i.
p. 21.

Ibid., p. 23.

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A stranger like myself inquiring who is he, the foremost and better dressed one? would be answered, 'That gentleman is Mr. Watson the elder, who was lately charged with high treason, and is now under bail to answer an indictment for a misdemeanour in consequence of his connexion with the late meeting at Spa-fields.' The person spoken of would be supposed to be about fifty years of age, with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner, and a degree of respectability and neatness in his dress. He was educated for a genteel profession, that of a surgeon; had practised it, and had in consequence moved in a sphere more high than his present one. He had probably a better heart than head; the latter had failed to bear him up in his station, and the ardour of the former had just before hurried him into transactions from the consequences of which he has not yet escaped. His son at this time was concealed in London, a large reward having been offered for his apprehension. The other man was Preston, a co-operator with Watson, Hooper, and others, in late riots. He was about middle age; of ordinary appearance, dressed as an operative, and walked with the help of a stick. I could not but entertain a slightful opinion of the intellect and trust-worthiness of these two men; when, on a morning or two afterwards, at breakfast with me and Mitchell, they narrated with seeming pride and satisfaction their several parts during the riots. Preston had mounted a wall of the Tower, and summoned the guard to surrender. The men gazed at him—laughed; no one fired a shot—and soon after he fell down, or was pulled off by his companions, who thought (no doubt) he had acted fool long enough."

The "late meeting at Spa-fields" here alluded to—the leaders of that meeting who loomed upon the Middleton delegate out of the reeking tobacco fog of a low tavern—were destined to become of historical importance. The general liberties of the country were suspended, chiefly through dread of the conspiracies of such men as the surgeon "with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner," and the operative who "walked with the help of a stick."

SPENCEANS.

The surgeon and the operative were leading members of a Society called the "Spencean Philanthropists." They derived their name from that of a Mr. Spence, a schoolmaster in Yorkshire, who had conceived a plan for making the nation happy, by causing all the lands of the country to become the property of the State, which State should divide all the produce for the support of the people. The schoolmaster was an honest enthusiast, who fearlessly submitted his plan to the consideration of all lovers of their species, and had the misfortune to be prosecuted for its promulgation in 1800. In 1816 "Spence's Plan" was revived, and the Society of Spencean Philanthropists was instituted, who held "sectional meetings," and discussed "subjects calculated to enlighten the human understanding." This great school of philosophy had its separate academies, as London was duly informed by various announcements, at "the Cock in Grafton-street, Soho;" and "the Mulberry Tree, Moorfields;" and "the Nag's Head, Carnaby Market;" and "No. 8, Lumber Street, Borough." At these temples of benevolence, where "every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum," it is not unlikely that some esoteric doctrines were canvassed, such as, that "it was an easy matter to upset Government, if handled in a proper manner." The committee of the Spenceans openly meddled with sundry grave questions besides that of a community in land; and amongst other notable projects petitioned Parliament to do away with ma-

chinery. They had not advanced to the more' recondite knowledge of the St. Simoniens of France, nor to that of the disciples of "the new social system" as expounded by M. Louis Blanc. But they had many very pretty theories, all founded upon the breaking up of the unequal distribution of individual property ; which theories are sometimes produced by the philanthropists of our own day as prodigious discoveries. Amongst these otherwise harmless fanatics some dangerous men had established themselves, such as Thistlewood, who subsequently paid the penalty of five years of maniacal plotting ; and some, also, who were clearly in communication with the police, and hounded on the weak disciples of the Cock in Grafton Street, and the Mulberry Tree in Moorfields to acts of more real danger to themselves than to the public safety. If we are to believe the chief evidence in these transactions, John Castle, a man of the most disreputable character, who became a witness against the leading Spencean philanthropists, they had murderous designs of sharp machines for destroying cavalry, and plans for suffocating quiet soldiers in their barracks, destroying them as boys burn wasps' nests ; and schemes for taking the Tower, and barricading London Bridge, to prevent the artillery coming from Woolwich. And there were to be five commanders to effect all these great movements of strategy,—Mr. Thistlewood, Mr. Watson the elder and Mr. Watson the younger, Mr. Castle, and Mr. Preston, who came the last in dignity, "because he was lame." And then there was to be a Committee of Public Safety, who were to be called together after the soldiers were subdued,—twenty-four good and true men,—amongst whom were "Sir Francis Burdett, the Lord Mayor [Alderman Wood], Lord Cochrane, Mr. Hunt, Major Cartwright, Gale Jones, Roger O'Connor, one Squire Fawkes of Barnbury Grange in Yorkshire, a person of the name of Sam Brookes, Thompson on Holborn Hill, the two Evanses, Watson, and Thistlewood." And then they calculated at what amount of public expense they could buy the soldiers, by giving them each a hundred guineas ; and upon an accurate computation it was found that the purchase-money would be "somewhere about two millions, which would be nothing in comparison with the national debt, which would be wiped off." With this preparation, if we may believe the very questionable evidence of Mr. Castle, a meeting was held at Spa-fields on the 15th November. Thirty years ago the district known as Spa-fields, now covered with dwellings of industry and comfortable residences of the middle classes, was a large unenclosed space ; and a public house was there, called by the mysterious name of Merlin's Cave ; and Mr. Hunt came in a chariot with the Watsons, and harangued a mob from the chariot roof, attended with a flag and cockades, and "everything handsome." And after adjourning the meeting for a fortnight, Mr. Hunt and the chariot went away, drawn by the mob ; and the mob running the chariot against a wall, they all got out and walked. So innocently passed the first Spa-fields meeting—innocently, save that at a dinner at Mr. Hunt's hotel in Bouverie Street, where, as he represented the matter, the philanthropists thrust themselves upon him very much against his will,—the betrayer Castle gave a toast, which is too infamous to be repeated here, and was threatened to be turned out of the room, but quietly remained, and went into what was described as "a fox sleep."

But the 2nd December, the day to which the first meeting was adjourned, closed not so peaceably. Mr. Hunt came to town from Essex in his tandem, and, as he passed along Cheapside, at "twenty minutes to one o'clock," he was

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Organisation du
Travail, 1845.

State Trials,
p. 218, &c.

Ibid., p. 233.

Ibid., p. 234.

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stopped by Mr. Castle, who was moving along with a considerable crowd ; and the worthy man told him that the meeting had been broken up two hours, and they were going to the Tower, which had been in their possession for an hour. The country squire, to whom “the boisterous hallooing of multitudes was more pleasing than the chinkling of the plough-traces, the bleating of lambs, or the song of the nightingale”—(in these terms Cobbett defended his friend for his aspirations after mob popularity)—was not weak enough to believe the tempter ; and his tandem went on safely to Spa-fields, where the greatest number of people were collected together that he had ever beheld. But more active Reformers were in Spa-fields before Mr. Hunt. The Spencean philanthropists had provided a waggon for their own operations, and arrived on the ground considerably before the appointed hour of meeting, with banners and inscriptions, one of which was “The brave Soldiers are our Friends.” These men also brought arms and ammunition, which they deposited in their waggon. Mr. Watson the elder commenced a sufficiently violent address, and then his son followed him. The young madman, after declaiming against the uselessness of petition, cried out, “If they will not give us what we want, shall we not take it? Are you willing to take it? Will you go and take it? If I jump down amongst you, will you come and take it? Will you follow me?” And as at every question the encouraging “Yes” became louder and louder, and put down the dissentient “No,” he jumped from the waggon, seized a tri-coloured flag, and away rushed the mob to take the Tower. Two resolute men, the chief clerk of Bow-street and a Bow-street officer, had the boldness to attack this mob, and destroyed one of their banners, without any injury to themselves. The work of mischief necessarily went on. The young fanatic led his followers to the shop of Mr. Beckwith, a gunsmith on Snow Hill ; and, rushing in, demanded arms. A gentleman in the shop remonstrated with him, and, without any pause, was immediately shot by him. Instantly some compunction seems to have come over this furious leader, and he offered to examine the wounded man, saying he was himself a surgeon. The assassin was secured ; but the mob, who destroyed and plundered the shop, soon released him, and proceeded along Cheapside, where they fired their recently-acquired arms, like children with a new plaything. They marched through the Royal Exchange, where they were met by the Lord Mayor, and several were secured. The City Magistrates on this occasion behaved with a firmness which admirably contrasted with the pusillanimity of their predecessors in the riots of 1780. The courage of the Lord Mayor and of Sir James Shaw is worthy of honourable record ; and it shows not only the insignificancy of the so-called conspiracy, its want of coherence and of plan, but the real power of virtue in action to put down ordinary tumult. Sir James Shaw says—“On the 2nd of December last I was at the Royal Exchange at half-past twelve ; I saw the mob first in Cornhill ; the Lord Mayor and I went in pursuit of them ; they crossed the front of the Royal Exchange ; we rushed through the Royal Exchange to take them in front on the other side : *the Lord Mayor and I* having received information of prior occurrences, determined on putting them down. I seized several of them, and one flag of three colours, extended on a very long pole. I did not then perceive any arms. The Lord Mayor and I went to meet the mob with Mr. White and two constables ; we got five constables in all ; the whole party consisted of eight.”

State Trials.

Such is the way in which the beginnings of seditions ought to be met. Firm-

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ness such as this would have saved Bristol in 1832. After a further plunder of gunsmiths' shops in the Minories, and that summoning of the Tower by some redoubted and unknown champion, who Bamford tells us was Preston, the insurrection fell to pieces, altogether from the want of cohesion in the materials of which it was composed. The only blood shed was that of the gentleman in Mr. Beckwith's shop, who eventually recovered. An unfortunate sailor was convicted of the offence of plunder at the shop on Snow Hill, and was hanged. The younger Watson escaped from his pursuers.

The narrative which we have thus briefly given is taken from the facts recorded in the voluminous trial of the elder Watson, in the summer of 1817, on a charge of high treason connected with this Spa-fields meeting. This is not the place to notice the course of that trial, which ended in the acquittal of the prisoner; nor to anticipate the account of the legislative measures of the spring of 1817, which were mainly founded upon the Reports of Secret Committees, in which this frantic riot was described as a most formidable organization of "desperate men, who calculated without reasonable ground upon defection in their opposers, and upon active support from those multitudes whose distress they had witnessed, and whom they had vainly instigated to revolt." The Parliamentary Reports speak of these transactions—in which a mighty government was to be overthrown, and a vast city, with its formidable array of police and soldiery, utterly subdued by five fanatics hounded on by a spy—with a solemnity which is now almost ludicrous. A few passages from the Report of the Secret Committee of the Lords will suffice:—

Commons' Report: Hansard, vol. xxxv. p. 443.

"A traitorous conspiracy has been formed in the metropolis for the purpose of overthrowing, by means of a general insurrection, the established government, laws, and constitution of this kingdom, and of effecting a general plunder and division of property. * * * Various schemes were formed for this purpose. Amongst them was a general and forcible liberation of all persons confined in the different prisons in the metropolis. * * * It was also proposed to set fire to various barracks, and steps were taken to ascertain and prepare means of effecting this purpose. An attack upon the Tower and Bank, and other points of importance, was, after previous consultations, finally determined upon. Pikes and arms to a certain extent were actually provided, and leaders were named, among whom the points of attack were distributed. * * * It appears quite certain that the acts of plunder which were perpetrated for the purpose of procuring arms, and the other measures of open insurrection which followed, were not accidental or unpremeditated, but had been deliberately preconcerted as parts of a general plan of rebellion and revolution."

Hansard, vol. xxxv. p. 411.

Within a week after these occurrences the Corporation of the City of London presented to the Throne an address and petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, in which they set forth the "grievances" of the country, and the necessity for Parliamentary Reform. The Lord Mayor was a decided political partisan, and the majority of the Corporation held then what were called Liberal opinions. But it is nevertheless pretty evident that if the events of the 2nd of December had been such as to produce real terror amongst the staid inhabitants of the city, this address would either not have been presented, or have been met by some counter-declaration of opinion.

ADDRESS OF THE CITY.

In 1814, when the long revolutionary war appeared to be ended, and men's minds were in a fever of joy at the extraordinary triumphs that conducted the

REAL DANGERS.

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allied armies to Paris, the Corporation of London went up with an Address of Congratulation to the Prince Regent, in which they say, "We cannot but look back with the highest admiration at the firmness, the wisdom, and the energy which have been exercised by our beloved country during this long and arduous struggle." In 1816, the same Corporation, in the Address of complaint to the Throne, says, "Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced and pertinaciously persisted in." The inconsistencies of a large popular body are not to be examined too severely; the change of tone ought to have shown the Government that it had its origin in some deep-rooted evil. The truth was, that the People, using the term in its largest sense, had ceased to sympathize with the Government. In 1814, and indeed during the fiercest years of the contest with Napoleon, the people were borne along with the Government by the irrepressible energy of our national character. The peace came, and the Government, instead of marching at the head of the people from victory to victory, was engaged in a struggle with the people for the maintenance of the war-system of taxation and lavish expenditure, when the war-excitement was passed away. Corn-laws carried amidst riots—property-tax maintained for a season, and then wrested out of their hands—large military establishments continued—sinecures upheld and defended—reckless extravagance in the highest places—these were the things that the most sober and reasonable of the middle classes felt to constitute a cruel injustice—which those below them confounded with the sanative course of legislative and executive authority. The nation was defrauded of its reasonable expectations. The real danger, therefore, was not so much that the people should be irritated and misled by mob-leaders and unscrupulous writers, as that a general feeling should grow up in the nation that Government was a power antagonistic to the people—a power to be striven against as against a natural enemy—an oppressive and not a protective power—a power of separate and exclusive interests from the people—a power never to be trusted. We speak advisedly, and from experience, when we say that this was the general feeling of the great bulk of the industrious classes, long after the first sufferings that attended the transition state of peace had passed away. This was the feeling that was far more dangerous to the national interests than any insurrectionary outbreak of the masses of the working population. Deluded these masses unquestionably were,—acted upon by demagogues. On the other hand, many amongst the upper and middle classes were alarmed into a prostrate adhesion to the menacing policy of the Government, and were ready with "lives and fortunes" to put down the revolutionary spirit which they were assured was working under the guise of Parliamentary Reform. But, during all this unhappy time, the Government had no love from any class—very little respect;—intense hate from many—slavish fear from more. The Government was denationalizing the people. There was no confidence on either side. The wounds of the State during the last years of the Regency were more severe than the wounds of war, and left deeper scars. The foundations of the State were loosened; there was no cohesion in the materials out of which the State was built up. The Government took the fearful course of sowing distrust of the poor amongst the rich. The demagogues did their own counter-work of exciting hatred of the rich amongst the poor. It was a season of reciprocal distrust. "Divide and govern" may be a safe maxim for subduing a faction; it is the most perilous principle for ruling a nation.

CHAPTER VI.

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ALGIERS.

THE attack upon Algiers forms an episode in the History of the Peace. This terrific assertion of the rights of civilized states, as opposed to barbarian violence and aggression, was, indeed, a consequence of the peace. The pirates of the Mediterranean were nourished in their lawless power by the jealousies of the maritime states of Europe: and England is perhaps not entirely free from the reproach which was raised against her, of having truckled to the insolent domination of Algiers and Tunis, that she might hold them, like ferocious beasts in her leash, ready to let slip upon her maritime enemies. War calls forth as many of the selfish as of the heroic passions. At any rate, the attitude which England assumed towards the Barbary States, at the termination of the war, was wholly different from that which she had maintained during many years, and under many governments, whether in war or in peace. Our treaties with these states had been of longer standing than those with any other European power. The treaties with Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, date as far back as 1662. With the exception of one vigorous reprisal for an outrage upon the English flag in 1695, the greatest maritime country in the world had, for a century and a half, exchanged courtesies with the corsairs, who not only robbed upon the seas, but carried off the defenceless inhabitants of the Italian shores to the most fearful and hopeless slavery. With the full knowledge of the extent of these atrocities we continued, up to the very end of the war, to treat these piratical governments with the respect due only to those states which submit to the law of nations. Lord Cochrane stated in Parliament in 1816, that, three or four years before, the humiliating duty had been imposed upon him of carrying rich presents from our Government to the Dey of Algiers; and it was even asserted, without contradiction, that a letter had been addressed to that chief pirate by the highest authority in our country. All this took place with the fullest conviction that the habits of the barbarian governments were wholly unchanged; that they were the same in the latter days of George the Third as they were in the days of Charles the Second. "Algiers," says a writer of 1680, "is a den of sturdy thieves formed into a body, by which, after a tumultuary sort they govern, having the Grand Signior for their protector, who supplies them with native Turks for their soldiery, which is the greatest part of their militia; and they, in acknowledgment, lend him their ships when his affairs require it. They are grown a rich and powerful people, and, by a long practice of piracy, become good seamen; and, when pressed by our men of war, as of late we have experimented, they fight and defend themselves like brave men, inferior, I am persuaded, to no people whatever. They have no commerce, and so are without any taste of the benefits of peace; whence their life becomes a continual practice of robbery, and, like beasts of the desert, they only forbear to wrong where by fear, not honesty, they are deterred."

Discourse touching Tangier: printed in the Harleian Miscellany.

And yet, however mean we may justly consider this long course of our national

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policy towards the Barbary States, the annihilation of their predatory governments was not an easy task to be accomplished, nor a safe object to be pursued even if it were for a time successful. These pirates of Africa started up three hundred years ago under the sway of the Barbarossas, and presented at once to the governments of Europe the daring, revengeful, and cruel race that they so long remained—opposed to every people—often chastised and menaced with destruction, but rising unsubdued from the passing blow, ready for new deeds of outrage and desperation. A long experience had shown that although pledges of peace—the release of Christian slaves, and the renunciation of the future power of making slaves—might be extorted from these States by the burning of their ships and the destruction of their fortifications, they would not continue the less a government of robbers, returning to their old trade in utter want of all other means of existence, all other sources of importance, all other relations of confidence between the rulers and the people. It was clear that Algiers, especially, would not come within the pale of civilization until it was revolutionized. England, which had just concluded a war against the aggrandizement of France, could not, with any consistency, have attempted to plant her laws and her language on the African shores of the Mediterranean; nor would she, with her experience of the difficulties of colonization under the most favourable circumstances, have endeavoured, amidst the jealousies and possible hostilities of Europe, to amalgamate her own people with the barbarians of Northern Africa, and thus to found an orderly, a civilized, and a powerful nation. It would have been no common task there to change the habits of centuries; to plant useful industry in the soil where only destructive rapine had flourished; to connect the people with their rulers by salutary laws; and, hardest of all, to defer something to national habits and prejudices, whether in religion or in morals. The task has since been attempted by another great nation, not in the spirit of colonization, but of conquest. It was our task, in 1816, to take neither course—content to succour the oppressed, and to humiliate the oppressor:

Ode on the Battle of Algiers, by R. Southey. First printed in *The Plain Englishman*, vol. iii. p. 427.

“ One day of dreadful occupation more,
Ere England’s gallant ships
Shall, of their beauty, pomp, and power disrobed,
Like sea-birds on the sunny main,
Rock idly in the port.

One day of dreadful occupation more !
A work of righteousness,
Yea, of sublimest mercy, must be done !
England will break the oppressor’s chain,
And set the captives free.”

At the Congress of Vienna the aggressions of the Barbary States formed a natural subject of deliberation. An attempt was made by some enthusiasts to get up a European crusade against the infidel corsairs. It was perhaps fortunate that the Congress had more pressing interests forced upon its attention. We were spared the fearful spectacle of Christianity girding on the sword of vengeance, to trample on the bleeding corse of an adverse faith. Civilization was content to assert her rights without the dangerous admixture of religious zeal. In 1815 the government of the United States, whose ships had been

plundered by the Algerines, captured a frigate and a brig belonging to the Dey, and obtained a compensation of sixty thousand dollars. It has been stated that this treaty saved the fleet of the Dey from attack in the harbour of Algiers—an enterprise which had been resolved upon by the government of the United States before the expedition of Lord Exmouth. In the spring of 1816, Lord Exmouth, with a squadron under his command, proceeded to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, where he effected the release of seventeen hundred and ninety-two Christian slaves, and negotiated treaties of peace and amity on behalf of the minor powers in the Mediterranean. From Tunis and Tripoli a declaration was obtained that no Christian slaves should in future be made by either of these powers. The Dey of Algiers, however, refused to agree to the abolition of slavery without permission from the Sultan. Lord Exmouth acceded to a suspension for three months of the Dey's decision; and returned to England with his fleet. One condition of the treaty with Algiers, then concluded by Lord Exmouth, was, that the governments of Sicily and Sardinia should pay ransom for the release of their subjects; and, in point of fact, they did so pay, to the extent of nearly four hundred thousand dollars. This clause of the treaty was justly denounced in the British Parliament, as an acknowledgment of the right of depredation exercised by the barbarians. In the debate on this occasion Lord Cochrane maintained "that two sail of the line would have been sufficient to compel the Dey of Algiers to accede to any terms. The city of Algiers was on the sea-shore, the water was deep enough for first-rates to come up to the very walls, and those were mounted only with a few pieces of cannon, with the use of which the barbarians were scarcely acquainted." Lord Cochrane qualified this opinion in the subsequent session. It was fortunate that such an assertion was not the cause of an inadequate preparation and a fatal repulse. Lord Exmouth had his own observation for his guide. The event proved that the place, as well as the people, had remained unchanged during a long course of years. The city still preserved its ancient strength; the people their accustomed daring and ferocity.

Lord Exmouth returned home from the Mediterranean in June, 1816. It would appear that the great possibility of the refusal of the Dey of Algiers altogether to renounce the practice of making slaves was not contemplated as a reason for hostile preparations. The fleet of Lord Exmouth was dismantled; the crews were paid off and disbanded. A sudden outrage, which occurred even before Lord Exmouth quitted the Mediterranean, but which did not then come to his knowledge, was the obvious cause of the change in the determination of our Government. In 1806 we contracted with the Dey for the occupation of Bona, a town, with a capacious harbour, in the regency of Algiers, for the purpose of the coral fishery being carried on under the protection of our flag. Here, on the 23rd of May, it being the season of the fishery, were assembled a great number of boats from the Italian shores, and as that day was the festival of the Ascension, the peaceful crews were preparing to hear mass: suddenly a gun was fired from the Algerine castle, and a large body of infantry and cavalry rushed upon the unfortunate fishers who had landed, and fired upon those who remained within the harbour in their boats; the guns from the forts also joined in this fearful massacre. The British flag was torn down and trampled under foot, and the house of our vice-consul was pillaged. It would appear that this was no concerted act of the Algerine government, but a sudden movement of

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Rush's Residence
at the Court of
London in 1818,
p. 237.

Hansard, vol.
xxxiv. p. 1147.

Ibid., p. 1149.

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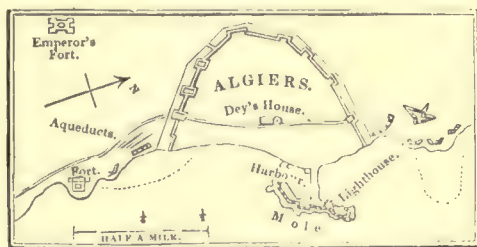
fanaticism on the part of the licentious soldiery. Be this as it may, an expedition against Algiers was instantly determined upon by the British cabinet. A formidable fleet was equipped, with the least possible delay, at Portsmouth, and crews were collected from the different guard-ships, and volunteers invited to serve upon this particular enterprise. For once, a British fleet went to sea without recourse to the disgraceful practice of impressment. To render crews efficient, who were so hastily collected and so unused to mutual operations, was a labour that required no common share of energy and prudence in the commander. With a part of his squadron, Lord Exmouth sailed to Plymouth, and finally left that port on the 28th of July, with a fleet consisting of twenty-five sail of large and small ships. At Gibraltar the British Admiral was joined by the Dutch Admiral, Van Cappellan, with five frigates and a sloop, and having also received a reinforcement of gun-boats, he finally set sail for Algiers on the 14th. The winds being adverse, the fleet did not arrive in sight of Algiers till the 27th of August. During his course Lord Exmouth spoke the British sloop *Prometheus*, which had been sent forward to bring off the British Consul from Algiers; the family of our public officer had been rescued, but the Consul himself had been put in chains. Here was a new insult to be avenged.

BOMBARDMENT.

A most interesting and graphic narrative of the expedition to Algiers was published by Mr. Abraham Salamé, a native of Alexandria, who was taken out by Lord Exmouth to act as his interpreter. The description of a sea-fight, like the description of a shipwreck, is generally vague and unsatisfactory, unless we associate our interest with the fate of some one individual. Mr. Salamé was, at one and the same time, an actor and a spectator in this remarkable contest. At five o'clock on the morning of the 27th, as the fleet was nearing Algiers, Salamé put on an English dress by the advice of Lord Exmouth, and was furnished with two letters, one for the Dey, the other for the British Consul. The letter to the Dey demanded the entire abolition of Christian slavery; the delivery of all Christian slaves in the kingdom of Algiers; the restoration of all the money that had been paid for the redemption of slaves by the King of the Two Sicilies and the King of Sardinia; peace between Algiers and the Netherlands; and the immediate liberation of the British Consul, and two boats' crews who had been detained with him. The commander's letter to the Consul of course contained an assurance that every effort should be made for his safety; but who, under such circumstances, could forget that when the French Admiral Duquesne, in 1682, bombarded Algiers, the Dey fastened the unhappy French Consul to the mouth of a cannon, and blew him to atoms in savage defiance of the hostile armament. At eleven o'clock the interpreter reached the mole, in a boat bearing a flag of truce, and delivering his letters to the captain of the port, demanded an answer to the letter addressed to the Dey in one hour. The Algerine engaged that an answer, if answer were returned at all, should be given in two hours; and in the mean time the interpreter remained in a sufficiently uncomfortable situation, within pistol-shot of thousands of the people who were on the walls and batteries. He employed himself in observing the situation of the city and the strength of the fortifications. His description of the place differs very little from that given by Joseph Pitts more than a century before. "The houses," says Pitts, "are all over white, being flat and covered with lime and sand as floors. The upper part of the town is not so broad as the lower part,

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and therefore, at sea it looks just like the top-sail of a ship. It is a very strong place, and well fortified with castles and guns. There are seven castles without the walls, and two tiers of guns in most of them; but in the greatest castle, which is on the mole without the gate, there are three tiers of guns, many of them of an extraordinary length, carrying fifty, sixty—yea, eighty pound shot. Besides all these castles, there is at the higher end of the town, within the walls, another castle with many guns. And, moreover, on many places towards the sea are great guns planted. Algiers is well walled, and surrounded with a great trench. It hath five gates, and some of these have two, some three, other gates within them; and some of them plated all over with thick iron. So that it is made strong and convenient for being what it is—a nest of pirates." The following little plan will give some idea of the strength of this place on the sea-side, at the period of Lord Exmouth's attack:—



The interpreter with his flag of truce waited for his answer from eleven o'clock till half-past two, but no answer came. During this time a breeze sprung up, the fleet advanced into the bay, and lay-to within half a mile of Algiers. The interpreter then hoisted the signal that no answer had been given, and the fleet immediately began to bear up, and every ship to take her position. Salamé reached the Queen Charlotte, Lord Exmouth's ship, in safety; but he candidly acknowledges, almost more dead than alive. Then he saw the change which comes over a brave and decided man at the moment when resolve passes into action. "I was quite surprised to see how his Lordship was altered from what I left him in the morning, for I knew his manner was in general very mild; and now he seemed to me *all-fightful*, as a fierce lion which had been chained in its cage and was set at liberty. With all that, his Lordship's answer to me was, 'Never mind, we shall see now;' and at the same time he turned towards the officers, saying 'Be ready!'" There is, perhaps, nothing in the history of warfare more terrific in its consequences than the first broadside that the British fired at Algiers. The Queen Charlotte passed through all the batteries without firing a gun, and took up a position within a hundred yards of the mole-head batteries. At the first shot, which was fired by the Algerines at the Impregnable, Lord Exmouth cried out, "That will do; fire, my fine fellows!" The miserable Algerines who were looking on, as at a show, with apparent indifference to the consequences, were swept away by hundreds by this first fire from the Queen Charlotte. "There was a great crowd of people in every part, many of whom, after the first discharge, I saw running away under the walls like dogs, walking upon their feet and hands." From a quarter before three o'clock till nine the most tremendous firing on both sides continued without intermission,

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and the firing did not cease altogether until half-past eleven. During this engagement of nine hours the allied fleet fired a hundred and eighteen tons of gunpowder and five hundred tons of shot and shells. The Algerines exclaimed that hell had opened its mouth upon them through the English ships. That the Algerines had plied their instruments of destruction with no common alacrity is sufficiently shown by the fact, that eight hundred and fifty-two officers and men were killed in the British squadron, and sixty-five in the Dutch. Lord Exmouth himself says in his dispatch, "There were awful movements during the conflict which I cannot now attempt to describe, occasioned by firing the ships so near us." Salamé says that one of the Algerine frigates, which was in flames, drifted towards the Queen Charlotte within about fifty feet of her; but a breeze springing up carried the burning frigate towards the town. The Algerine batteries around Lord Exmouth's division were silenced about ten o'clock, and were in a complete state of ruin and dilapidation; but a fort at the upper angle of the city continued to annoy our ships, whose firing had almost ceased. This was the moment of the most serious danger to our fleet. Our means of attack were well-nigh expended; the upper batteries of the city could not be reached by our guns; the ships were becalmed. "Providence at this interval," says Lord Exmouth, "gave to my anxious wishes the usual land wind, common in this bay, and my expectations were completed. We were all hands employed warping and towing off, and by the help of the light air the whole were under sail, and came to anchor out of reach of shells about two in the morning, after twelve hours' incessant labour." There, when the ships had hauled out beyond the reach of danger, a sublime spectacle was presented to the wondering eyes of the interpreter, who had ventured out of the safety of the cockpit to the poop of the Queen Charlotte. Nine Algerine frigates and a number of gun-boats were burning within the bay; the storehouses within the mole were on fire; the blaze illumined all the bay, and showed the town and its environs almost as clear as in the day-time; instead of walls the batteries presented nothing to the sight but heaps of rubbish; and out of these ruins the Moors and Turks were busily employed in dragging their dead. When the fleet had anchored a storm arose—not so violent as the storm which here destroyed the mighty fleet of Charles the Fifth, and left his magnificent army, which had landed to subdue the barbarians, to perish by sword and famine—but a storm of thunder and lightning which filled up the measure of sublimity, at the close of the twelve awful hours of battle and slaughter.

It is unnecessary for us minutely to trace the progress of the subsequent negotiations with the humbled and sulky Dey. On the morning of the 28th Lord Exmouth wrote a letter to this chief, who had himself fought with courage, in which the same terms of peace were offered as on the previous day. "If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns," wrote Lord Exmouth. The three guns were fired, the Dey made apologies, and treaties of peace and amity were finally signed, to be very soon again broken. The enduring triumph of this expedition was the release, within three days of the battle, of a thousand and eighty-three Christian slaves, who arrived from the interior, and who were immediately conveyed to their respective countries. "When I arrived on shore," says Salamé, "it was the most pitiful sight to see all those poor creatures, in what a horrible state they were; but it is impossible to describe the

joy and cheerfulness of them. When our boats came inside the mole, I wished to receive them (the slaves) from the captain of the port by number, but could not, because they directly began to push and throw themselves into the boats by crowds, ten or twenty persons together, so that it was impossible to count them: then I told him that we should make an exact list of them in order to know to what number they amounted. It was, indeed, a most glorious and an ever memorably merciful act for England, over all Europe, to see these poor slaves, when our boats were shoving with them off the shore, all at once take off their hats and exclaim in Italian, “Viva il Ré d’Ingliterra, il padre eterno! e’l Ammiraglio Inglese che ci ha liberato da questo secondo inferno!” (“Long live the King of England, the eternal father! and the English Admiral who delivered us from this second hell!”)

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“Seldom hath victory given a joy like this,—
 When the delivered slave
 Revisits once again his own dear home,
 And tells of all his sufferings past,
 And blesses Exmouth’s name.

Southey’s Ode.

Far, far and wide, along the Italian shores
 That holy joy extends;
 Sardinian mothers pay their vows fulfilled;
 And hymns are heard beside thy banks,
 O Fountain Arethuse!”

CHAPTER VII.

1816.

PROGRESS OF
SOCIAL IMPROVE-
MENT.

See the Curse of
Kehama, section
xxiii.

Utopia, Intro-
ductory Discourse
to. Dibdin's ed.,
1808, vol. i. p. 75.

Hansard, vol.
xxiv. p. 684.

CRIMINAL LAWS.

Romilly's Diary,
Oct. 1807.

"**S**ILENT leges inter arma"—the laws are silent in the midst of arms—said the great Roman orator. During our quarter of a century of war, the laws held on their course; but few had the courage to question the wisdom of that course, and still fewer the leisure to attend to any suggestions of improvement. The daring adventurer who then mounted the car of progress had to guide it, self-balanced, over the single rib of steel which spanned the wide gulf between the land of reality and the land of promise. Romilly was the foremost amongst the courageous spirits who risked something for the amelioration of the lot of their fellow-men. In 1516 Sir Thomas More wrote, "I think it not right nor justice that the loss of money should cause the loss of man's life; for mine opinion is that all the goods in the world are not able to countervail man's life. But if they would thus say, that the breaking of justice, and the transgression of laws, is recompensed with this punishment, and not the loss of the money, then why may not this extreme and rigorous justice well be called plain injury? For so cruel governance, so straight rules, and unmerciful laws be not allowable, that if a small offence be committed, by and bye the sword should be drawn; nor so stoical ordinances are to be borne withal, as to count all offences of such equality that the killing of a man, or the taking of his money from him, were both one matter." In 1816 Sir Samuel Romilly carried a Bill through the House of Commons abolishing capital punishment for shoplifting, which had been rejected by that House three years before. The House of Lords, however, threw out this Bill; and on that occasion, three hundred years after Sir Thomas More had proclaimed the opinion which we have just recited, Lord Ellenborough, the Lord Chief Justice, "lamented that any attempts were made to change the established and well-known criminal law of the country, which had been found so well to answer the ends of justice."

The history of the reform of our criminal law presents one of the most encouraging examples of the unconquerable success of the assertion of a right principle, when it is perseveringly advocated, and never suffered to sleep; and when, above all, the reformation is attempted step by step, and the prejudices of mankind are not assailed by the bolder course which appears to contemplate destruction and not repair. The name of reform in the criminal laws had not been heard in the House of Commons for fifty-eight years, when, in 1808, Romilly carried his Bill for the abolition of the punishment of death for privately stealing from the person to the value of five shillings; in other words, for picking pockets. It is instructive to see how, through the force of the circumstances around him, Romilly approached the subject of this reform with a caution which now looks almost like weakness. His object was originally to raise the value according to which a theft was rendered capital. In January, 1808, he gave up the intention of bringing forward even this limited measure—he was sure the judges would not approve of it. To another distinguished lawyer belongs the

merit of having urged Romilly to a bolder policy. His friend Scarlett, he says, "had advised me not to content myself with merely raising the amount of the value of property, the stealing of which is to subject the offender to capital punishment, but to attempt at once to repeal all the statutes which punish with death mere thefts unaccompanied by any act of violence or other circumstance of aggravation. This suggestion was very agreeable to me. But, as it appeared to me that I had no chance of being able to carry through the House a Bill which was to expunge at once all these laws from the statute-book, I determined to attempt the repeal of them one by one; and to begin with the most odious of them, the Act of Queen Elizabeth, which makes it a capital offence to steal privately from the person of another." Upon this prudential principle Romilly carried his first reform in 1808. But the House of Commons, which consented to pass the Bill, forced upon him the omission of its preamble:—"Whereas, the extreme severity of penal laws hath not been found effectual for the prevention of crimes; but, on the contrary, by increasing the difficulty of convicting offenders, in some cases affords them impunity, and in most cases renders their punishment extremely uncertain." The temper with which too many persons of rank and influence received any project of amelioration at the beginning of this century, is forcibly exhibited in an anecdote which Romilly has preserved for our edification: "If any person be desirous of having an adequate idea of the mischievous effects which have been produced in this country by the French revolution and all its attendant horrors, he should attempt some legislative reform, on humane and liberal principles. He will then find, not only what a stupid dread of innovation, but what a savage spirit, it has infused into the minds of many of his countrymen. I have had several opportunities of observing this. It is but a few nights ago, that, while I was standing at the bar of the House of Commons, a young man, the brother of a peer, whose name is not worth setting down, came up to me, and breathing in my face the nauseous fumes of his undigested debauch, stammered out, 'I am against your Bill; I am for hanging all.' I was confounded; and endeavouring to find out some excuse for him, I observed that I supposed he meant that the certainty of punishment affording the only prospect of suppressing crimes, the laws, whatever they were, ought to be executed.' 'No, no,' he said, 'it is not that. There is no good done by mercy. They only get worse; I would hang them all up at once.'"

In 1810 Sir Samuel Romilly brought in three Bills to repeal the Acts which punished with death the crimes of stealing privately in a shop goods of the value of five shillings, and of stealing to the amount of forty shillings in a dwelling-house or on board vessels in navigable rivers. The first Bill passed the House of Commons, but was lost in the Lords. The other two were rejected. In 1811 the rejected Bills were again introduced, with a fourth Bill abolishing the capital punishment for stealing in bleaching-grounds. The four Bills were carried through the House of Commons; but only that on the subject of bleaching-grounds was sanctioned by the Lords. The constant argument that was employed on these occasions against the alteration of the law was this—that of late years the offences which they undertook to repress were greatly increased. Justly did Romilly say, "A better reason than this for altering the law could hardly be given." On the 24th of May, 1811, when three of the Bills were

1816.

Romilly's Diary,
April, 1808.

Ibid. June, 1808.

1816.

Hansard, vol. xx.
p. 299.Ibid. vol. xx.
p. 300.

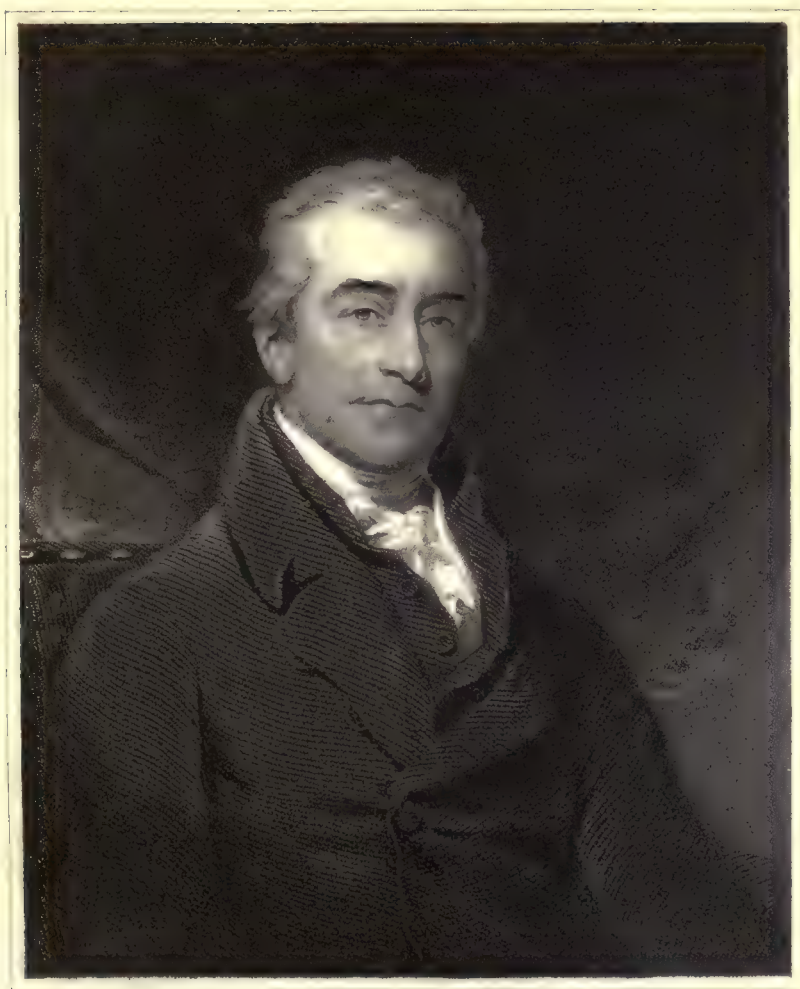
rejected in the House of Lords, Lord Ellenborough declared, "They went to alter those laws which a century had proved to be necessary, and which were now to be overturned by speculation and modern philosophy." The Lord Chancellor, Eldon, on the same occasion stated, that he had himself early in life felt a disposition to examine the principles on which our criminal code was framed, "before observation and experience had matured his judgment. Since, however, he had learnt to listen to these great teachers in this important science, his ideas had greatly changed, and he saw the wisdom of the principles and practice by which our criminal code was regulated." In 1813 Sir Samuel Romilly's Bill for the abolition of capital punishment in cases of shoplifting was carried by the Commons in the new Parliament; but it was again rejected in the House of Lords. No further attempt was made towards the amelioration of this branch of our laws till the year 1816; which attempt we have now more particularly to record.

Ibid. vol. xxxiii.
p. 630.

On the 16th of February Sir Samuel Romilly obtained leave to bring in a Bill repealing the Act of William the Third which made it a capital offence to steal privately in a shop to the value of five shillings. He described this Act as the most severe and sanguinary in our statute-book; inconsistent with the spirit of the times in which we lived; and repugnant to the law of nature, which had no severer punishment to inflict upon the most atrocious of crimes. As recently as 1785, no less than ninety-seven persons were executed in London for this offence alone; and the dreadful spectacle was exhibited of twenty suffering at the same time. The capital sentence was now constantly evaded by juries committing a pious fraud, and finding the property of less value than was required by the statute. The consequence, if severe laws were never executed, was, that crime went on to increase, and the crimes of juvenile offenders especially. On moving the third reading of the Bill, on the 15th of March, Sir Samuel Romilly called attention to the great number of persons of very tender age who had recently been sentenced to death for pilfering in shops. At that moment there was a child in Newgate, not ten years of age, under sentence of death for this offence; and the Recorder of London was reported to have declared that it was intended to enforce the laws strictly in future, to interpose some check, if possible, to the increase of youthful depravity. The Bill passed the Commons, but was thrown out in the Lords on the 22nd of May. On this occasion the Lord Chief Justice agreed with the Lord Chancellor, "that the effect of removing the penalty of death from other crimes had rendered him still more averse to any new experiment of this kind. Since the removal of the vague terror which hung over the crime of stealing from the person, the number of offences of that kind had alarmingly increased. Though the punishment of death was seldom inflicted for crimes of this nature, yet the influence which the possibility of capital punishment had in the prevention of crimes could scarcely be estimated, except by those who had the experience in the operation of the criminal law which he had the misfortune to have. When it was considered that the protection of the property in all shops depended on the Act before them, and that even now thefts of that description were numerous, the House would not, he trusted, take measures to increase them."

Ibid. vol. xxxiii.
p. 374.Ibid. vol. xxxiv.
p. 684.

When we look back on the debates upon the criminal law, from 1809 to 1816, and see how little was asked by Romilly, and refused to him, compared with the



Engraved by R. Woodman

SIR S. ROMILLY.

*From an Enamel after a Picture by
The Thomas Lawrence*

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1816.

amount of reform that has since been accomplished, we can only regard the arguments for the support of the ancient system of capricious terror as the arguments of men slowly and painfully emerging from barbarism. When, in the time of Henry VI., more persons were executed in England in one year for highway robbery than the whole number executed in France in seven years; when, in the reign of Henry VIII., seventy-two thousand thieves were hanged, being at the rate of two thousand a year; and when, in the reign of George III., as we have seen, twenty persons were executed on the same morning in London, for privately stealing;—we see the principle of unmitigated ferocity, the savagery which applies brute force as the one remedy for every evil, enshrined on the judgment-seat. The system went on till society was heart-sick at its atrocities, and then rose up the equivocating system which Lord Chancellors, and Lord Chief Justices, and Doctors in Moral Philosophy, upheld as the perfection of human wisdom—the system of making the lightest as well as the most enormous offences capital, that the law might stand up as a scarecrow—an old, ragged, ill-contrived, and hideous mawkin—that the smallest bird that habitually pilfered the fields of industry despised while he went on pilfering. With the absolute certainty of experience that bloody laws rigorously administered did not diminish crime, the legislators of the beginning of the nineteenth century believed, or affected to believe, that the same laws scarcely ever carried into execution would operate through the influence of what they called “a vague terror.” As if any terror, as a preventive of crime or a motive to good, was ever vague. The system was entirely kept in existence by the incompetence and idleness of the law-makers and the law-administrators. A well-digested system of secondary punishments never seemed to them to be within the possibility of legislation. We are very far from the solution of this great problem in our own days; but we have made some steps towards its attainment.

Fortescue.

Harrison.

The revolting cruelty and the disgusting absurdity of our criminal laws, thirty years ago, were in perfect harmony with the system of police, which had then arrived at its perfection of imbecile wickedness. The machinery for the prevention and detection of crime was exactly accommodated to the machinery for its punishment. On the 3rd of April, on the motion of Mr. Bennet, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of the police of the metropolis. The Committee was resumed in 1817; and two Reports were presented, which were amongst the first causes of the awakening of the public mind to a sense of the frightful evils which were existing in what we flattered ourselves to be the most civilized city in the world. Twelve years after, a Committee of the House of Commons thus described the police system of 1816 and 1817:—“If a foreign jurist had then examined the condition of the metropolis, as respected crime, and the organization of its police—and if, without tracing the circumstances from which that organization arose, he had inferred design from the ends to which it appeared to conduce—he might have brought forward plausible reasons for believing that it was craftily framed by a body of professional depredators, upon a calculation of the best means of obtaining from society, with security to themselves, the greatest quantity of plunder. He would have found the metropolis divided and subdivided into petty jurisdictions, each independent of every other, each having sufficiently distinct interests to engender perpetual jealousies and animosities, and being sufficiently free from

Police.

Report on Preventive Police, 1829.

1816.

Report on Metropolitan Police.

any general control to prevent any intercommunity of reformation or any unity of action." Another Committee of the House of Commons, reporting in 1833, says of the same system, "The police was roused into earnest action only as some flagrant violation of the public peace, or some deep injury to private individuals, impelled it into exertion; and security to persons and property was sought to be obtained, not by the activity and wholesome vigour of a preventive police, which it is a paramount duty of the State to provide, but by resorting from time to time, as an occasional increase of the more violent breaches of the law demanded it, to the highest and ultimate penalties of that law, in the hope of checking the more desperate offenders." The same report says, "Flash-houses were then declared to be a necessary part of the police system, where known thieves, with the full knowledge of the magistrates and public officers, assembled, until the State, or individuals, from the losses they had sustained, or the wrongs they had suffered, bid high enough for their detection."

Flash-houses, known in the scientific phraseology of the police as "flash-cribs," "shades," and "infernals," were filthy dens, where thieves and abandoned females were always to be found, riotous or drowsy, surrounded by children of all ages, qualifying for their degrees in the college of crime. "There," says a Middlesex magistrate, examined before the Committee of 1816, "they (the children) see thieves and thief-takers sitting and drinking together on terms of good-fellowship; all they see and hear is calculated to make them believe they may rob without fear of punishment, for in their thoughtless course they do not reflect that the forbearance of the officers will continue no longer than until they commit a forty-pound crime, when they will be sacrificed." A forty-pound crime!—the phraseology is as obsolete as if it were written in the pedlar's French of the rogues of the sixteenth century. A forty-pound crime was a crime for whose detection the State adjudged a reward, to be paid on conviction, of forty pounds; and, as a necessary consequence, the whole race of thieves were fostered into a steady advance from small offences to great, till they gratefully ventured upon some deed of more than common atrocity, which should bestow the blood-money upon the officers of the law who had so long petted and protected them. The system received a fatal blow in 1816, in the detection of three officers of the police, who had actually conspired to induce five men to commit a burglary for the purpose of obtaining the rewards upon their conviction. The highwaymen who infested the suburbs of the metropolis had been eradicated—they belonged to another age. Offences against the person were very rarely connected with any offences against property. But the uncertainty of punishment, the authorized toleration of small offenders, and the organized system of negotiation for the return of stolen property, had filled the metropolis with legions of experienced depredators. The public exhibitions of the most profligate indecency and brutality can scarcely be believed by those who have grown up in a different state of society. When Defoe described his Colonel Jack, in the days of his boyish initiation into vice, sleeping with other children amidst the kilns and glasshouses of the London fields, we read of a state of things that has long passed away; but, as recently as 1816, in Covent-Garden Market, and other places affording a partial shelter, hundreds of men and women, boys and girls, assembled together, and continued during the night, in a state of shameless profligacy, which is described as presenting a scene of

vice and tumult more atrocious than anything exhibited even by the lazzaroni of Naples.

1816.

GAS-LIGHT.

The brilliantly lighted, carefully watched, safe, orderly, and tranquil London of the present day, presents as great a contrast to the London of 1816, as that again, contrasted with the London of 1762—the year in which the Westminster Paving and Lighting Act was passed. Street-robberies, before that period, were the ordinary events of the night: security was the exception to the course of atrocity, for which the Government applied no remedy but to hang. For half a century after this the metropolis had its comparative safety of feeble oil-lamps and decrepid watchmen. The streets were filled with tumultuous vagabonds; and the drowsy guardians of the night suffered every abomination to go on in lawless vigour, happy if their sleep were undisturbed by the midnight row of the drunken rake. In 1807 Pall-Mall was lighted by gas. The persevering German who spent his own money and that of the subscribers to his scheme, had no reward. The original gas company, whose example was to be followed not only by all England, but the whole civilized world, were first derided, and then treated in Parliament as rapacious monopolists intent upon the ruin of established industry. The adventurers in gas-light did more for the prevention of crime than the Government had done since the days of Alfred. We turn to the Parliamentary Debates, and we see how they were encouraged in 1816—nine years after it had been found that the invention was of unappreciable public benefit:—"The company," said the Earl of Lauderdale, "aimed at a monopoly, which would ultimately prove injurious to the public, and ruin that most important branch of trade, our whale fisheries." Alderman Atkins "contended that the measure was calculated to ruin that hardy race of men, the persons employed in the Southern and Greenland whale fisheries, in each of which a million of money and above a hundred ships were engaged. If the Bill were to pass, it would throw out of employ ten thousand seamen, and above ten thousand ropemakers, sailmakers, mastmakers, &c., connected with that trade." Who can forbear to admire the inexhaustible fund of benevolence that for ages has been at work in the advocacy of the great principle of protection. At every step of scientific discovery which promises to impart new benefits to mankind, however certain and unquestionable be the benefit, we are called upon to maintain the ancient state of things, amidst the terrible denunciations of ruin to some great interest or other. It is quite marvellous the ruin that has been threatening us since the peace, when capital has been free to apply itself in aid of skill and enterprise. The ruin that gas-light was to produce is a pretty fair example of the ruin that has gone on, and is still going on, for no objects but those of thinning our population, diminishing our manufactures, crippling our commerce, extinguishing our agriculture, and pauperizing our landed proprietors. There never was a nation doomed to such perils by the restless character of its people. They will not let well enough alone, as the only wise men say. In 1816 they risked the existence of the British navy, which depended upon the whale fisheries, for the trifling advantage of making London as light by night as by day, and bestowing safety and peacefulness upon its million of inhabitants. And yet, at the very moment that this ruin was predicted to oil, it was admitted that we could not obtain a sufficiency of oil. There are some lessons yet to be learnt on the subject of protection, even from this petty fight of oil and gas.

Hansard, vol. xxxiv. p. 1280.

Ibid. p. 1072.

1816.

MENDICITY AND
VAGRANCY.LAW OF SETTLE-
MENT.

A Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1815 to inquire into the state of mendicity and vagrancy in the metropolis and its neighbourhood; and they continued their sittings in 1816, reporting minutes of the evidence in each year. Beyond these Reports no legislative measure was adopted. The evidence went rather to show the amount of imposture than of destitution. To collect such evidence was an amusing occupation for the idle mornings of Members of Parliament. To inquire into the causes of destitution and its remedies would have been a far heavier task. The chief tendency of the evidence was to show how the sturdy beggar was a capitalist and an epicure: ate fowls and beefsteaks for supper, and despised broken meat; had money in the funds, and left handsome legacies to his relations. The witnesses, moreover, had famous stories of a lame impostor who tied up his leg in a wooden frame, and a blind one who wrote letters in the evening for his unlettered brethren; of a widow who sat for ten years with twins who never grew bigger, and a wife who obtained clothes and money from eleven lying-in societies in the same year. But the Committee had also some glimpses of real wretchedness amidst these exciting tales of beggar-craft—as old as the days of the old Abraham men. They heard of Calmel's Buildings, a small court of twenty-four houses in the immediate vicinity of Portman Square, where more than seven hundred Irish lived in the most complete distress and profligacy;—and they were told that the court was totally neglected by the parish; that it was never cleaned; that people were afraid to enter it from dread of contagion. In George Yard, Whitechapel, they were informed that there were two thousand people, occupying forty houses, in a similar state of wretchedness. Much more of this was told the Committee; but the evil was exhibited and forgotten. Very much of what was called the vagrancy of the metropolis was a natural consequence of the administration of the Poor Laws throughout the kingdom. A large proportion of the money raised for the relief of the poor was expended in shifting the burthen of their relief from one parish to another; and Middlesex kept a number of functionaries in active operation, to get rid of the vagrants that crowded into London, by passing them out of the limits of the metropolitan county, to return, of course, on the first convenient occasion. The vagrants were dealt with “as the Act directs”—that is, they were committed to a house of correction for seven days, and then passed to their respective parishes, if they belonged to England, or carted to Bristol or Liverpool, if they were natives of Ireland. As Middlesex worked under the Law of Settlement, so worked the whole kingdom. This Law of Settlement was in full operation, playing its fantastic tricks from the Channel to the Tweed, when the peace filled the land with disbanded seamen and other servants of war; and agricultural labourers, who could find no employ at home, were wandering, as it was called, to search for capital where capital was seeking for labour. The statute of 1662, the foundation of the Law of Settlement, forbade this wandering, and gave a very amusing explanation of the ground of its prohibitions: “Whereas, by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock.” The great natural law of labour seeking exchange with capital was to be resisted by a law which declared that those who sought to effect this exchange were “rogues and vagabonds.” But

still, in spite of statute upon statute, the labourers would wander, and "endeavour to settle themselves in the parishes where there is the best stock;" and, the happy days being gone, never to return, when Poor Tom was "whipped from tything to tything, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned," the poor-law functionaries, in deference to the more merciful spirit of the age, employed a great portion of their time, and a larger portion of the public money, in carrying the labourers about from one end of the kingdom to the other, parcelling them out with the nicest adjustment amongst the fourteen thousand little divisions called parishes, and determining that whatever circumstances existed in any one of these fourteen thousand divisions to make the presence of the labourers desirable or otherwise, they should go, and they should stay, where they had been born or apprenticed, or last lived for a year. The Committee of the House of Commons on Mendicity and Vagrancy, in 1816, received evidence upon evidence of the extent of this transplantation of labourers, which set the whole country alive with the movements of vagrant-carts, without the slightest suspicion that there was something radically wrong at the foundation of a system which cost the rate-payers several millions annually in expenses of removal and of litigation, and with an indirect cost to the nation of many millions of profitable labour, which was destroyed by this constant exercise of the disturbing forces of ignorant legislation. After the peace the clinging of parishes to the Law of Settlement became more monstrous than ever. "Soon after the close of the war, when the agricultural labourers were increased by the disbanding of the army, and the demand for their labour was diminished from various causes, *agricultural parishes very generally came to the resolution of employing none but their own parishioners*, which ruined the industry of the country, and produced more individual misery than can be conceived by those who were not eye-witnesses: the immediate consequence of this determination was, the removal of numbers of the most industrious families from homes where they had lived in comfort, and without parish relief, all their lives, to a workhouse in the parish to which they belonged; and, without materially affecting the ultimate numbers in the respective parishes, the wretched objects of removal, instead of happy and contented labourers, became the miserable inmates of crowded workhouses, without the hope of ever returning to their former independence."

1816.

Answers from
Sussex to Com-
missioners of
Poor-Law In-
quiry.

On the 28th of May Mr. Curwen, an intelligent agriculturist, brought the subject of the Poor Laws before the House of Commons, on a motion for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry. Mr. Curwen had a plan—as many others had their plans. His plan was to abolish the poor-rates, enacting "that every individual who made any profit or advantage by his labour, should contribute towards a parish fund for the relief of sickness, age, or misfortune, for the encouragement of industry and good morals, for a general plan of education, and such other objects as might be conducive to the comforts and happiness of the labouring classes; to which fund capitalists and property should contribute." Mr. Curwen had a theory that the extension of manufactures, having raised the average rate of wages, had produced general improvidence; that improvidence was the main cause of distress and poor-rates; and that to abridge the means of improvidence, by converting all the labouring population into fourteen thousand parochial friendly societies, was at once to establish the comfort and independence of all who had been so long degraded and demoralized by parish

GENERAL AD-
MINISTRATION OF
THE POOR LAWS.

1816.

allowances. It is scarcely necessary for us to dwell upon the practical absurdity of this benevolent dream. The scheme of Mr. Curwen formed small part of the deliberations of the Committee, which reported in 1817. Their recommendations for the remedy of the enormous evil of the existing Poor Laws did not penetrate beneath the surface. It may be desirable here to record what was the actual state of poor-law administration thirty years ago.

The system of Poor Laws in England began, no doubt, in expediency. The gradual breaking up of feudal service and protection, the sudden dissolution of the monastic institutions, and the almost concurrent depreciation of the value of money consequent upon the discovery of America, produced an aggregate of misery which imperatively demanded a forced contribution from capital. The same laws which, justly and mercifully to a certain extent, required that casual misfortune should be relieved, also provided that "the poor should be set to work." The natural operations of demand and supply were here disturbed; the natural relations between profits and wages were interrupted; a fund was created for the labourers, which could not be distributed with reference to the amount of profitable labour; the fund for the support of profitable labour was therefore broken in upon; and, for three centuries, consequently, a struggle was going forward between the demands of want and the demands of industry. Circumstances, which arose almost within our own generation, went on steadily breaking down the barriers which separated the two classes of claimants upon the labour-fund; and at the close of the war, with reference to the largest body of labourers, the agricultural, the distinction between the two classes of claimants had in great part ceased. The demands of want and the demands of industry were confounded. The members of one class had insensibly slid into the other. The wages of idleness and vice, and the wages of industry and good conduct, were to be paid out of a common purse; and it is not therefore to be wondered at if the easier claim upon the wages had been generally preferred to the more laborious.

In 1816 the sum expended for the relief of the poor of England and Wales amounted to 5,724,839*l*. The average annual expenditure had gradually increased from about two millions, at the commencement of the war, to six or seven millions at its close. A very large portion of the money that had been spent in fostering pauperism during the war years, by parish allowances in aid of wages, represents the amount of degradation and misery which the labourers endured, as compared with their unallowanced forefathers. The national debt represents, in a great degree, the money expended in unprofitable wars,—the waste of capital upon objects that can only be justified by the last necessity, and which are the result of those evil passions which the improved knowledge and virtue of mankind may in time root out. In the same way, had the money expended upon fostering pauperism been raised upon loan, we should have had an amount of some two hundred millions, representing, in a like degree, the waste of capital expended in drying up the sources of industry and skill, and paying the alms of miserable indigence instead of the wages of contented labour. It is difficult to conceive a more complete state of degradation than the allowanced labourers exhibited in 1816. With the feudal servitude had passed away the feudal protection. The parish servitude imposed the miseries and contumelies of slavery, without its exemption from immediate care and

1816.

Agricultural
State of the King-
dom, 1816; pub-
lished by the
Board of Agricul-
ture.

future responsibility. So far were the agricultural labourers slaves, that, although they could not be actually sold, like "villeins in gross," their labour was put up by auction to the best bidder by parish authorities. "The overseer calls a meeting on Saturday evenings, where he puts up each labourer by name to auction; and they have been let generally at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week, and their provisions; their families being supported by the parish." When we regard the high price of food in 1816, with the inability of many tenants to pay poor-rates, we can scarcely be surprised at these barbarous attempts to diminish the pressure of the allowance system. The whole adjustment of the social relations between the employer and the labourer, under this system, was founded upon injustice and oppression, on one hand, and fraud and improvidence on the other. The farmer refused to employ the labourer till he had reduced him, by withholding employment, to beggary; robbed the labourer of his fair wages, to dole out to him "head-money," not according to his worth, but his necessities; denied employ to the single labourer at all; discharged his best workman, with a small family, to take on the worst, with a large family; and left his own land uncultivated, that a congregation of worthless idlers might be paid upon the pretence of working on the roads, while the independent labourer was marked as a fool for making any attempt to "earn his bread by the sweat of his brow." The authorities doled out their allowances upon the most partial and despotic system. The squire, the clergyman, and the farmer constituted themselves a tribunal for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, and they succeeded in producing either desperation or hypocrisy amongst the entire labouring population. If the junta was completed by the addition of a paid assistant-overseer, the discrimination was perfect. Squalid filth was the test of destitution, and whining gratitude, as it was called, for the alms distributed, was the test of character. If a labourer with a manly bearing came to the overseer, or to the vestry, to remove some sudden calamity—if he asked something to prevent him selling his bed,—he was insulted. The agonized tear of wounded pride might start from the eye, and perhaps the groan of suppressed indignation escape from the lips. If the groan was heard, that man's "character" was gone for ever. The pretence to discriminate between the good and the evil did much worse for the community than occasional injustice. It led away parish functionaries from the real object of their appointment,—to administer relief to the indigent,—into the belief that they were the great patrons of the whole labouring population, who could never go alone without their aid. They almost forced the condition of pauperism upon the entire working community by their beautiful system of rewards and punishments. They forgot that it was their business to give relief to destitution, and to destitution only; and so they established every sort of false test of relief.

The old workhouse system was as productive of evil in principle, though not in amount, as the allowance system. The wretchedness of the parish workhouse, in consequence of bad management, and the want of order and classification, had become a prominent feature in pictures of English society. Seldom under any control, the workhouses afforded abundant proofs of neglect and want of feeling on the part of those who had the management of them. The workhouse-master, who, probably, contracted for the paupers at a certain rate per head,

1816.

endeavoured to remunerate himself for the hardness of his bargain by disposing of the services of the inmates to the neighbouring farmers. Abuses had so long existed that they excited no remark. No means were taken to educate the children; no classification took place between the able-bodied; but persons of both sexes, the aged and the young, the sick and the lunatic, were huddled promiscuously together. Such was the state of most workhouses in the rural districts. Many of the London parishes farmed their poor,—that is, they contracted with individuals to maintain them at a certain rate per head. They were wretchedly lodged, without comfort or decency; ill-fed; allowed the use of ardent spirits, and encouraged to obtain them, by being suffered to wander abroad without restraint, to swell the numbers of metropolitan mendicants. In the parish workhouses the consequences of want of classification and bad management operated with the greatest hardship upon children. Habits were formed in the workhouse which rendered the path to respectability almost inaccessible. These children were disposed of under the apprenticing system, and were doomed to a dreary period of servitude, under some needy master who had been tempted in the first instance to take them by the offer of a small premium. The parochial plan of putting out children, with its attendant evils, was a necessary consequence of the want of training while in the workhouse. If these children had received useful instruction, and been brought up in habits of order and industry, their compulsory distribution among the different rate-payers would have been unnecessary, as each child would have been as valuable to its master as the children taken from the independent cottager. Even in those workhouses where attempts were made to conduct them according to the statute (43rd of Elizabeth), directing that the fund for the relief of the poor should be employed in setting them to work in the poorhouse or workhouse, there were necessarily the grossest mistakes and mismanagement. In some of these houses manufacturing operations were carried on; and in others land was rented and the inmates were employed in agricultural labour. Interests which never prosper but in the hands of private individuals were expected to become productive; notwithstanding the great majority of persons concerned were necessarily impelled to foster abuses out of which they could advance their own personal profit. The trades usually pursued were sack, linen, or cloth factories, or the manufacture of nets. The profits of the private dealer and the wages of the independent workmen were liable to unjust depreciation, for the operations of the houses of industry were not regulated by the extent of the demand, but would be most active when the markets were glutted. Workmen left the private factory because there was a superabundant supply of the article which they were engaged in producing, and they entered into the house of industry to add still further to the overstocking of the market. The balance by which the healthy state of the demand and supply could be regulated was destroyed. There is no balance which can be held between the funds for the maintenance of labour and the number of the labourers, but through the uncontrolled exchange of capital and labour, each operating with perfect freedom and perfect security. Whenever the scales are held by any other power than the natural power of exchange—whenever there is a forced demand for labour produced by a forced supply of capital—the natural proportions of capital and labour are destroyed by a forced addition to the number of labourers. All schemes for “setting the poor to work” by

unnatural encouragements to labour assume that "the poor" is a constant quantity;—the unnatural encouragement produces more poor, and the funds that have been diverted from the regular labour-market are devoured in an accelerated ratio.

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The poor-law, as it existed in full vigour at the close of the war, went further than any other human device for diminishing the funds for the maintenance of labour, and at the same time increasing the number of labourers. Rewards for illegitimate children, rewards for children under improvident marriages, sustenance for the pauper child from the hour he was born, increased sustenance as he grew, a large and liberal allowance for him when he prematurely married another pauper; and the same round again, till the next pauper generation was quadrupled in number. If these laws, intrusted as they were in their application to narrow-minded, short-sighted, and selfish individuals, had been imposed upon us by some dominant enemy, for the destruction of our best interests, they could not have more effectually answered such an end. They did two things which must produce misery and crime, and would have produced eventual anarchy, unless their progress had been arrested—they destroyed the labour-fund, and they increased the number of the labourers. They bestowed on unproductive consumers the bread which they took out of the mouths of the profitable labourers; and they, one by one, ground down the profitable labourers to the grade of unproductive consumers. Under these laws, no one was secure, and no one was happy. The labourers, for whose especial benefit they were alleged to be upheld, were the most insecure and the most unhappy. The dream of Pharaoh, that "seven lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up it could not be known that they had eaten them, but they were still ill-favoured as at the beginning," was realized by the labourers of England under the old Poor-Laws.

In 1807 Mr. Whitbread proposed to the House of Commons a very large and comprehensive measure of Poor-Law Reform. The principles which he advocated were those of real statesmanship. To arrest the constant progress of pauperism he desired to raise the character of the labouring classes. He called upon the country to support a plan of general national education; he proposed a method under which the savings of the poor might be properly invested, in a great national bank. The last object has been fully accomplished. How little has the Government done for the other object during forty years! At the period when Mr. Whitbread brought forward his plan of Poor-Law Reform, the system of mutual instruction, introduced by Lancaster and Bell, was attracting great attention. Too much importance was perhaps at first attached to the mechanical means of education then recently developed; but the influence was favourable to the establishment of schools by societies and individuals. The Government left the instruction of the people to go on as it might, without a single grant for more than a quarter of a century. It was in vain that in 1807 Whitbread proclaimed the important truth, that nothing can possibly afford greater stability to a popular government than the education of its people. "Contemplate ignorance in the hand of craft,—what a desperate weapon does it afford! How impotent does craft become before an instructed and enlightened multitude!" Again: "In the adoption of the system of education I foresee an enlightened peasantry, frugal, industrious, sober, orderly, and contented; be-

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Hansard vol.
viii. p. 577.

Ibid., p. 918.

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cause they are acquainted with the true value of frugality, sobriety, industry, and order. Crimes diminishing, because the enlightened understanding abhors crime. The practice of Christianity prevailing, because the mass of your population can read, comprehend, and feel its divine origin, and the beauty of the doctrines which it inculcates. Your kingdom safe from the insults of the enemy, because every man knows the worth of that which he is called upon to defend." Did Whitbread take one legislative step in advance by the enunciation of these truths? He was treated as a benevolent visionary; and every particle of his Poor-Law Reform, and especially his plans for instruction and the investment of savings, were sneered away, whilst ministers and magistrates went on in the usual course of keeping the great body of the people ignorant, dependent, and wretched. A man of talent, Mr. Windham, put himself at the head of the advocates for keeping the people from the perils of instruction: "His friend Dr. Johnson was of opinion that it was not right to teach reading beyond a certain extent in society. The danger was, that if the teachers of the good and the propagators of bad principles were to be candidates for the control of mankind, the latter would be likely to be too successful. . . . The increase of this sort of introduction to knowledge would only tend to make the people study politics, and lay them open to the arts of designing men." This miserable logic answered its end for a season. Education was held to be dangerous—at least in England. In Ireland, the Government encouraged education. In 1816 Mr. Peel, as Secretary for Ireland, maintained that "it was the peculiar duty of a Government that felt the inconvenience that arose from the ignorance of the present generation, to sow the seeds of knowledge in the generation that was to succeed." The natural connexion between ignorance and poverty was never more clearly put, at a very early period of discussing such questions, than by the present excellent Bishop of Chester: "Ignorance is not the inevitable lot of the majority of our community; and with ignorance a host of evils disappear. Of all obstacles to improvement, ignorance is the most formidable, because the only true secret of assisting the poor is to make them agents in bettering their own condition, and to supply them not with a temporary stimulus, but with a permanent energy. As fast as the standard of intelligence is raised, the poor become more and more able to co-operate in any plan proposed for their advantage, more likely to listen to any reasonable suggestion, more able to understand, and therefore more willing to pursue it. Hence it follows, that when gross ignorance is once removed, and right principles are introduced, a great advantage has been already gained against squalid poverty. Many avenues to an improved condition are opened to one whose faculties are enlarged and exercised; he sees his own interest more clearly, he pursues it more steadily, he does not study immediate gratification at the expense of bitter and late repentance, or mortgage the labour of his future life without an adequate return. Indigence, therefore, will rarely be found in company with good education."

From 1807 to the close of the war, the Legislature heard no word on the Education of the People. On the 21st May, 1816, Mr. Brougham moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of the Education of the lower orders of the people in London, Westminster, and Southwark. The motion, which was brought forward with great caution by the mover, was unopposed. The Committee made its first Report on the 20th

Hansard., vol. ix.
p. 548.

Ibid., vol. xxxiv.
p. 38.

Sumner's Records
of the Creation,
vol. ii. p. 338.

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June, having conducted its inquiries with more than usual activity. The energy of Mr. Brougham, who acted as chairman, gave a remarkable impulse to this important investigation. It was found that in the metropolis there were a hundred and twenty thousand children without the means of education. On presenting this Report, Mr. Brougham informed the House that the Committee had comprehended in their objects inquiries concerning the management of the higher schools—such as the Charter House, Christ's Hospital, and Westminster, the funds of such schools being originally destined for the use of the poor. The principal labours of the Committee had, however, consisted in their examination of evidence as to the number and condition of the charity and parish schools destined for the education of the lower orders. The number of such institutions exceeded anything that could have been previously believed; but the expenditure of the funds was, in many cases, neither pure nor judicious. A few were educated and brought up—the many were neglected. In the country he had heard of instances of flagrant abuses. Mr. Brougham's Report produced no hostile feelings on this occasion. Lord Castlereagh acknowledged that abuses existed in many charities for the purposes of education, and recommended the exercise of a vigilant superintendence of their administration. In 1817 the Committee was revived, but was adjourned in consequence of the illness of the chairman; but in 1818 it was again appointed, with powers of inquiry no longer confined to the metropolis. Then the larger question of the extension of education was merged in a furious controversy as to the amount of abuses in endowed charities, and the propriety of subjecting the higher schools, such as Eton and Winchester, and also Colleges in the Universities, to a searching inquiry into the nature of their statutes, and their adherence to the objects of their foundation. An Act was subsequently passed, in consequence of the labours of the Committee, to appoint Commissioners to inquire concerning the abuse of Charities connected with Education; and by a second Act the right of inquiry was extended to all charities, the Universities and certain great Foundation Schools excepted. The Education Commission was thus merged in the Charity Commission. Of the great national benefits that resulted from that Commission no one can doubt. But it may be doubted whether the controversial shape which the question of education thus assumed, in 1818, did much to advance the disposition to provide a general system of popular instruction which prevailed in 1816. When Mr. Brougham first obtained his Committee, he said, "his proposition was, that a measure for the education of the poor under parliamentary sanction, and on parliamentary aid, should be tried in London; for without a previous experiment he should not deem it proper to bring forward any general measure. But if the experiment should be found to succeed in London, he would then recommend the extension of the plan to other great towns." This plan was never carried out, or further proposed. When Mr. Brougham presented his first Report, there was unanimity and even cordiality in its reception by the House of Commons. Mr. Canning declared that "he should contribute all his assistance to the object of the Report, satisfied that the foundation of good order in society was good morals, and that the foundation of good morals was education."

Hansard, vol.
xxxiv. p. 1232.

Ibid., vol. xxxiv.
p. 633.

Ibid., vol. xxxiv.
p. 1235.

What was the temper of the House and of the country in 1818 is strikingly exhibited in a speech of Mr. Brougham's in 1835:—"In the year 1818 the

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Speech in the
House of Lords
on the Education
of the People :
Speeches, vol. iii.
p. 220.

labours of the Education Committee of the House of Commons,—labours to which no man can attach too high a value,—were made the subject of great controversy—a controversy as fierce and uncompromising as almost any that ever raged, and to which I only refer as affording another reason for the hope I so fondly cherish, that though now, perhaps, in a minority upon this, as upon many other questions here debated, I yet may ultimately find myself with scarcely an antagonist. That bitter controversy is at an end—the heats which it kindled are extinguished—the matter that engendered those heats finds equal acceptance with all parties. Those are now still, or assenting, or even supporting me, who then thought that I was sowing broadcast the seeds of revolution, and who scrupled not to accuse me as aiming at the ‘dictatorship,’ by undermining the foundations of all property. Those who once held that the Education Committee was pulling down the Church, by pulling down the Universities and the great Schools—that my only design could be to raise some strange edifice of power upon the ruins of all our institutions, ecclesiastical and civil—have long ceased to utter even a whisper against whatever was then accomplished, and have become my active coadjutors ever since. Nay, the very history of that fierce contention is forgotten. There are few now aware of a controversy having ever existed, which, a few years back, agitated all men all over the country; and the measures I then propounded among revilings and execrations, have long since become the law of the land. I doubt whether, at this moment, there are above some half-dozen of your Lordships, who recollect anything about a warfare which for months raged with unabated fury both within the walls of the Universities and without—which seemed to absorb all men’s attention and to make one class apprehend the utter destruction of our political system, while it filled others with alarm lest a stop should be put to the advancement of the human mind. That all those violent animosities should have passed away, and that all those alarms be now sunk in oblivion, affords a memorable instance of the strange aberrations—I will not say of public opinion, but—of party feeling, in which the history of controversy so largely abounds. I have chiefly dwelt upon it to show why I again trust that I may outlive the storms which still are gathering round those who devote themselves rather to the improvement of their fellow-creatures than the service of a faction.” From some unhappy prejudice—from apathy or from cowardice—the education of the people made small legislative progress for twenty years. Perhaps the old fable of the sun and the wind, experimenting upon the removal of the traveller’s cloak, may afford us some solution of this problem. But the Reports of the Education Committee were of the highest value in showing us the extent of instruction at the time of its labours. There were 18,500 schools, educating 644,000 children; of this number 166,000 were educated at endowed schools, and 478,000 at unendowed schools, during six days of the week. This number was independent of Sunday-schools, of which there were 5100, attended by 452,000 children; but of course many of these Sunday-scholars were included in the returns of other schools.

SAVINGS BANKS.

Hansard, vol.
viii. p. 829.

In the plan of Poor-Law Reform brought forward by Mr. Whitbread in 1807, he earnestly advocated the consideration of a mode by which the savings of the poor might be safely and profitably invested: “I would propose the establishment of one great national institution, in the nature of a bank, for the use and advantage of the labouring classes alone; that it should be placed in the

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metropolis, and be under the control and management of proper persons, to be appointed according to the provisions contained in the Bill I shall move for leave to introduce; that every man who shall be certified by one justice, to his own knowledge, or on proof, to subsist principally or alone by the wages of his labour, shall be at liberty to remit to the Accountant of the Poor's Fund (as I would designate it), in notes or cash, any sum from 20s. upwards; but not exceeding 20*l.* in any one year, nor more in the whole than 200*l.* That once in every week the remittances of the preceding week be laid out in the 3 per Cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, or in some other of the Government stocks, in the name of commissioners to be appointed; to avoid all minute payments, no dividend to be remitted till it shall amount to 10*s.*, and that all fractional sums under 10*s.* be from time to time re-invested, in order to be rendered productive towards the expenses of the office." Three or four years previous Mr. Malthus, in his 'Essay on Population,' had argued that "it might be extremely useful to have county banks, where the smallest sums would be received, and a fair interest granted for them." Mr. George Rose had, as early as 1793, legislated for the encouragement of Friendly Societies. In 1798 a bank for the earnings of poor children was established at Tottenham; and this was found so successful, that a bank for the safe deposit of the savings of servants, labourers, and others, was opened at the same place in 1804. Interest was here allowed to the depositors. A similar institution was founded at Bath in 1808. But the greatest experiment upon the possibility of the labouring poor making considerable savings was tried in Scotland. "The Parish Bank Friendly Society of Ruthwell" was established by the Rev. Henry Duncan in 1810. The first London savings' bank did not commence its operations till January, 1816. In the Parliamentary Session of 1816 Mr. Rose brought in a bill for the regulation of savings' banks, which was subsequently withdrawn for revision. Of the possible benefits of these institutions there could be no doubt in the minds of all men who were anxious to improve the condition of the people. Writers of opposite parties agreed in this matter: "Savings' Banks are spreading rapidly through Scotland; and we expect soon to hear the like good tidings from England, where such an institution is of still greater importance. It would be difficult, we fear, to convince either the people or their rulers that such an event is of far more importance, and far more likely to increase the happiness and even the greatness of the nation, than the most brilliant success of its arms, or the most stupendous improvements of its trade or its agriculture.—And yet we are persuaded that it is so." Again: "They to whom this subject is indifferent may censure our minuteness; but those who, like us, regard it as marking an era in political economy, and as intimately connected with the external comfort and moral improvement of mankind, will be gratified to trace the rise and progress of one of the simplest and most efficient plans which has ever been devised for effecting these invaluable purposes." The language of the real philanthropist, whatever be his party, may be easily distinguished from the language of the demagogue:—"What a bubble! At a time when it is notorious that one half of the whole nation are in a state little short of starvation; when it is notorious that hundreds of thousands of families do not know, when they rise, where they are to find a meal during the day; when the far greater part of the whole people, much more than half of them, are paupers; at such a time to bring forth a project for

Edin. Rev.,
June, 1816.

Quarterly Rev.,
Oct. 1816.

Cobbett's Regist.,
Jan. 4, 1817.

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Mr. Tidd Pratt's
Report, 1846.

collecting the *savings* of journeymen and labourers in order to be *lent to the Government*, and to form a fund for the support of the lenders in sickness and old age!" The most sanguine expectations of the promoters of Savings' Banks could scarcely have anticipated that, within less than thirty years, the number of institutions in existence would amount to 577 in the United Kingdom; that the total number of existing depositors would be 1,012,475; that they would possess an aggregate of property amounting to 31,275,636*l.*; and that the whole number of depositors would have received interest amounting to 16,254,109*l.**

ELGIN MARBLES.

Hansard, vol.
xxxiv. p. 1034.

There is one other measure of social improvement from which we cannot withhold a slight notice. In 1816 the House of Commons passed a vote for the purchase of the Elgin Marbles, for the sum of 35,000*l.* This was the first step that the British legislature had made in the encouragement of the Fine Arts. It was a step in the education of the people. Mr. Croker, who, as it appears to us, was far in advance of his time on this subject, truly and eloquently said what cannot be too often repeated in the consideration of such questions: "The House had been warned, in the present circumstances of the country, not to incur a heavy expense merely to acquire works of ornament. But who was to pay this expense, and for whose use was the purchase intended? The bargain was for the benefit of the public, for the honour of the nation, for the promotion of national arts, for the use of the national artists, and even for the advantage of our manufactures, the excellence of which depended on the progress of the arts in the country. It was singular, that when, two thousand five hundred years ago, Pericles was adorning Athens with those very works, some of which we are now about to acquire, the same cry of economy was raised against him, and the same answer that he then gave might be repeated now, that it was money spent for the use of the people, for the encouragement of arts, the increase of manufactures, the prosperity of trades, and the encouragement of industry; not merely to please the eye of the man of taste, but to create, to stimulate, to guide the exertions of the artist, the mechanic, and even the labourer, and to spread through all the branches of society a spirit of improvement, and the means of a sober and industrious affluence." Slowly, indeed, have these great principles progressed—but they have progressed.

* This Return is from August, 1817, to November, 1844. The number of banks and depositors, and amount of deposits, have been

much increased since the making up of the Return.

CHAPTER VIII.*

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SPANISH
AMERICA.

GREAT movements and changes, which had for some time been going on in the New World, now began to draw a more fixed attention than they had hitherto received from the Old, unfolding prospects in the highest degree interesting to our own country in particular; and at this point it therefore becomes desirable to throw back such a rapid but comprehensive glance over the events which had been taking place in those regions of the globe, as may at least mark out correctly and distinctly their origin, their general course, and their results. What was said by a distinguished writer a few years ago is still true:—"The confused South American revolution, and set of revolutions, like the South American continent itself, is doubtless a great confused phenomenon; worthy of better knowledge than men yet have of it. Several books... have been written on the subject; but bad books mostly, and productive of almost no effect. The heroes of South America have not yet succeeded in picturing any image of themselves, much less any true image of themselves, in the Cis-Atlantic mind or memory." Yet, scattered as they are in many books, and variously represented to an extent probably exceeding any other example of the proverbial uncertainty and contradiction of recent history, a sufficiency of well established facts for our present purpose may be collected and arranged in moderate space.

Article (by Mr. Carlyle) on Dr. Francia, in the Foreign Quarterly Review for July, 1843.

The vast dominions belonging to the crown of Spain on the American continent—stretching in an unbroken line over nearly seventy-seven degrees of latitude—were originally divided into two viceroyalties:—that of Mexico, comprehending all the territory in North America, or from about the 7th to the 38th or 39th degree of North latitude; and that of Peru, extending over the space, of varying breadth, from the Isthmus of Darien to about 38 degrees to the south of the line. The seat of government in Mexico, often called the Kingdom of New Spain, was the ancient city from which the viceroyalty took its name, situated midway across the continent, and at no very incommensurable distance at first from any point in the actually occupied part of the country, though far enough both from the extreme wildernesses of California and Florida in the north-west and north-east, and from the equally unpenetrated or unsubdued Mosquito country and the regions beyond it to the south. The

* This chapter on Spanish America is contributed by a friend who has bestowed on the subject much attention. Similar assistance may be rendered in other special portions

of this History; it being premised that a general agreement of opinion as to the treatment of the particular subject is an obvious condition of such aid.—C. K.

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capital of Peru was Lima, on the coast of the Pacific, thirty-two degrees of latitude to the south of Mexico, but yet separated by twenty-six degrees more from the southern extremity of the viceroyalty of which it was the nominal head. In course of time, however, it was found expedient, as new interests grew up, and places at a great distance from the two capitals rose into importance, to separate certain portions from each of these enormous governments. In this way, first the northern portion of Peru was formed into a third viceroyalty, that of New Grenada, with the city of Santa Fé de Bogota, about halfway between Lima and Mexico, for its capital; afterwards a still larger territory was cut off from the ancient limits of Peru, on the south-east, to form a fourth viceroyalty, that of the Rio de la Plata, the seat of government for which was established at Buenos Ayres, near the mouth of the river so called, on the opposite side of the continent. And at different times five minor governments were also constituted, with the name of captain-generalships:—namely, that of Venezuela, composed of the eastern part of the viceroyalty of New Grenada, with Caracas for its capital; that of Chili, with Santiago for its capital, formed of another portion of the ancient viceroyalty of Peru to the south; that of Guatemala, with its capital of the same name, abstracted from the southern part of the viceroyalty of Mexico; that of the Havannah, comprehending the island of Cuba and the Floridas; and that of Porto Rico, to which the other islands belonged. A recollection of these divisions will be found convenient in following the detail of the events to be related now and in subsequent notices of the same subject; for the newly established independent states have for the most part been formed out of the old viceroyalties and captain-generalships. It only remains to be added that Jamaica was wrested from this power by England in 1655; that it had been obliged to cede the western part of Hispaniola (otherwise St. Domingo, or Hayti) to France in 1697, and the remainder in 1795; that Florida, though ceded to England in 1763, was recovered by Spain in 1781; that Louisiana, acquired from France in 1763, was restored to that country in 1800, and purchased from France by the United States in 1803; and that the whole of the eastern portion of the South American continent, with the exception of that part of the viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata which extended to the Atlantic, and of English, Dutch, and French Guyana, at the opposite point, formed the vast country of Brazil, which had always belonged to Portugal, and had only been Spanish for the sixty years when the two countries were united, from 1580 to 1640.

In England we had been made familiar with one kind of colonization, or at least of foreign occupation, by our North American, with another by our East Indian possessions. In the former the original inhabitants had been entirely displaced by the settlers; in the latter the natives had been left undisturbed, and only the government of the country had been taken possession of. The Spanish colonization of the continent of America was a combination of the two forms. The population there really or nominally subject to the Spanish sceptre consisted in part of Spaniards and their descendants, in part of the aboriginal races, in part of a mixture of the two. But even the portion of it that was of pure European blood was divided in interests and affections, partly by the natural effects of position, partly by the peculiar policy adopted by the mother country. Although the Creoles, or American-born descendants of settlers,

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were not legally disqualified for public employment in the land of their birth, they were excluded by a rule of state or of custom which was very rarely broken through. Almost all offices, from the highest to the lowest, in every one of the governments, were uniformly and systematically bestowed upon individuals sent out from Old Spain merely to reap the harvest of their appointments, the produce of which, besides, generally depended much less upon the fixed salary than upon a multitude of arbitrary or irregular fees and exactions only to be properly designated by the term pillage. And this was only the most conspicuous or obtrusive of the grievances of which the colonists had to complain, and which tended both to keep them in a state of depression and to alienate them in heart from the mother country, or at least might be counted upon as sure to produce the latter effect whenever circumstances should afford them a prospect of escaping from the former. For the policy appears, it must be confessed, to a great extent to have answered its purpose so long as the Creoles, kept down and insulted as they were, and as they must have felt themselves to be, had still no other vision of patriotism to cling to than what was supplied by their connexion, such as it was, with the country of their ancestors. They were not Spaniards, it is true; but as little were they Americans: in some of the governments more particularly they were still only an alien minority intermingled with or surrounded by another population, that of the native tribes and the mixed races, who properly were the real Americans, and considered themselves to have the rightful claim to the soil as against both Creole and Spaniard.

In fact, the case to which the Spanish colonization of America bears the closest resemblance is the English colonization of Ireland. The position of the descendants of the English settlers in that country used to correspond exactly to that of the Creoles: in one part of the country they were in a minority, in another in a majority, as compared with the native population and that of mixed blood; but everywhere, while they were not looked upon as Irish, they were at the same time not looked upon as English. They were almost as completely excluded from public employment as the native Irish themselves; no Irishman was, as such, disqualified from holding office, but in point of fact almost all government offices were held by Englishmen. They and the Creoles of America were thus in like manner drawn by two opposite interests; and both were so situated as that, in the event of a contest of arms breaking out, they would find themselves between two fires. The forces, and many of the particular circumstances, were different in the two cases; but what did take place, or might naturally have taken place, in the one may enable us to perceive what was the tendency of things in the other. Spaniards are not Englishmen; the free constitution of England did not permit Ireland to be ruled in all respects as America was ruled by Spain; no Dean Swift arose to awaken in the Creoles the feeling that they were or ought to be a nation; nor had they ever enjoyed even such semblance or shadow of free institutions as the Protestants of Ireland possessed in their so-called Parliament and their other English forms of government. But yet the policy pursued in the two cases was, as far as circumstances permitted, the same in spirit and in principle. The maintenance of the subordination of the colonized to the colonizing and governing country was alike the object in both; both in Ireland and in Spanish Ame-

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rica nearly all places of honour and profit were reserved for natives of the mother country; expensive establishments, both civil and ecclesiastical, were kept up almost exclusively for their benefit; the indigenous commerce and manufactures were put in shackles, or strangled outright, that those of the mother country might flourish or might be freed from competition—in the case of America, indeed, that the mother country with suicidal infatuation might merely indulge in a little more luxury and a little more laziness and idleness. Most of the grievances—of the real grievances—of Ireland, have fortunately been redressed in time; but the position in which the Anglo-Irish would have found themselves in any attempt to effect the independence of that country in other circumstances would have a good deal resembled that of the Creoles at the breaking out of the revolutionary movements in Spanish America. If the Irish insurrection had been originally a native, and, therefore, a Roman Catholic one, the part of the population which was of English descent would certainly have been withheld from joining it by its English and Protestant sympathies; but it might have been otherwise with an attempt of the same kind springing from another quarter. There might have been for a time considerable indecision and hesitation with the half-English half-Irishman; where he was surrounded by a preponderating native population, what was anti-Irish in him would, probably, in the first instance, have inclined him to stand aloof from, or to oppose, the movement; where there was less to alarm him with the prospect of a worse domination if he should succeed in throwing off that of England, he would perhaps in most cases have at once joined the national cause. But in either case that cause was sure of him in the end. So it was with the Creoles when the standard of independence was raised in Spanish America. They owed no gratitude to the mother country, which had treated them not as a mother, but as a step-mother; and if, from old tradition, or use and wont, they felt any attachment in that quarter, the feeling was not of a nature long to withstand the sentiment of a more immediate nationality, drawing them in an opposite direction, when once fairly awakened and called into action. Still, they had been accustomed to look up to Old Spain as their natural head and protector, in the want of any other; and even the state of subserviency in which she had kept them had tended to nourish both their want of confidence in themselves and their actual incapacity for self-government. But what must have chiefly weighed with them was the chance they might think they had of being able to secure a position in the country, at least equal to what they had hitherto held, in the event of its becoming independent. Would they be strong enough, after the Europeans were driven out, to prevent themselves from being brought under a still more oppressive yoke, by the population of native origin and mixed blood, than that under which they were kept by Spain? It was a serious question, and might well make them both pause and vacillate. And so in fact they did, or evinced an inclination to do, wherever the prospect before them was thus dubious, until compelled by the force of circumstances to take their side. But they were, of course, the only portion of the population who thus hesitated, at least from any doubt or divided feeling as to what might be the consequences of the struggle for independence if it should prove successful. The natives and the mixed castes might be deterred by considerations of prudence from rising in revolt; but at heart they were, in every one of the colonies, naturally as

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much united in aversion to the dominion of Spain, as the handful of public functionaries and other native Spaniards resident for the time in the country were in its support.

We shall find presently, however, that when the struggle did at last come, it was in circumstances which still further complicated the calculations both of the Creoles, and even of the public functionaries themselves and other colonists of European birth. But we must first notice some occurrences of earlier date.

The emancipation of Spanish America had been a speculation among politicians ever since the establishment of the independence of the English colonies. England owed Spain a return in kind for the assistance she had lent to that revolution; France, herself revolutionized by the rebound of the blow she had struck at England in America, was impelled by all sorts of reasons, or motives, to propagate the movement under which she was herself convulsed and heaving; as soon as Spain should break with either of these powers, she was in danger of having the same game to play in her trans-Atlantic dominions in which England had lately been engaged in hers. Indeed, while the contest between England and her colonies still raged, an insurrection of the Creoles and Indians had broken out in Peru and New Grenada; and two years after, another in the former viceroyalty, which had at first threatened to prove much more serious, and which it was thought might probably have succeeded so far as to wrest all the mountainous part of the country from Spain if the sanguinary proceedings of the Indians had not soon produced a separation between them and their allies of white and mixed race. The English Government had made an attempt to turn the first of these outbreaks to account; but an expedition which was fitted out for that purpose was not more wisely planned, nor more ably or successfully conducted, than the generality of the other operations of this unfortunate war.

In an English publication, the *Political Herald and Review* for 1785, there appeared the following paragraph:—"The flame which was kindled in North America, as was foreseen, has made its way into the American dominions of Spain. That jealousy which confined the appointments of government in Spanish America to native Spaniards, and established other distinctions between these and their descendants on the other side the Atlantic, has been a two-edged sword, and cut two ways. If it has hitherto preserved the sovereignty of Spain in those parts, it has sown the seeds of a deep resentment among the people. Conferences are held, combinations are formed in secret, among a race of men whom we shall distinguish by the appellation of Spanish Provincials. The example of North America is the great subject of discourse, and the grand object of imitation. In London we are well assured there is at this moment a Spanish American of great consequence, and possessed of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, who aspires to the glory of being the deliverer of his country."

The above passage is quoted in a remarkable article which was published in the number of the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1809. The personage thus announced was Francisco de Miranda, afterwards famous under the name of General Miranda. He was a Creole, a native of the city of Caracas, in Venezuela, where he is said to have been born about the middle of the last century. His family was one of the most opulent and distinguished in the province of Caracas, of which his grandfather had been governor. Having been

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Edinburgh Rev.
for Jan. 1809, p.
285.

permitted to come over to Spain when only seventeen, he had, by the influence of his family, obtained a captain's commission in the Spanish army; and he afterwards served with his regiment in North America in the war between England and her colonies. At the peace he resigned his commission, and it was now that he made his first visit to England, whence he afterwards proceeded to the Continent, and made a tour through the principal countries of Europe. Returning to England in 1789, or the beginning of 1790, he was introduced to Mr. Pitt, to whom he submitted a plan for the emancipation of the Spanish colonies, to which that minister is said to have given the most cordial reception; but, the dispute with Spain about Nootka Sound being soon after adjusted, the scheme was dropped for the present. It is asserted, however, by the writer in the Edinburgh Review, who is understood to have derived his information from Miranda himself, that Pitt assured Miranda the measure would not be lost sight of, "but would infallibly engage the attention of every minister of this country." These words must have been well remembered thirty-three years after by Canning.

Ibid. pp. 288, 289.

Miranda now turned to the revolutionary government of France, and accepted a military command in its service. In the end of November, 1792, Brissot wrote from Paris to Dumouriez, with whom Miranda then was in the Netherlands, strongly urging that general to give his consent to a plan for sending him out to the West Indies, first to quiet St. Domingo, then to rouse all Spanish America, and finally to come back and revolutionize Old Spain itself. This magnificent design, however, never got farther than paper. Miranda himself seems to have had great misgivings about the *premier pas*—the reduction of St. Domingo. It is asserted, too, that he had by this time begun to fear that the revolution in France "was proceeding too fast and too far;" and that, although he was soon after thrown into confinement by Robespierre, he might still, after the death of that tyrant, have become a leading man in the revolution if he had not refused the command of an army, which was offered to him by the new government, on the plea that "though he had fought for liberty, it was not his purpose to fight for conquest." It is added, that he forthwith, in 1795, published at Paris a pamphlet maintaining these views.

Lavaysse's Description of Venezuela, &c.
English translation, Lond. 1820,
8vo., pp. 22 et seq.

After all, however, it was not by Miranda, or through his instrumentality, that the next attempt was made to effect the separation and independence of Spanish America. Already, in 1794, conspiracies of which little is known had broken out both in New Grenada and in Mexico. It was given out by the Spanish government that the latter was the work of two Frenchmen, and that their plan was to murder the viceroy and his family, and to deliver up the city of Mexico to be plundered by the Indians. But what took place three years after in Venezuela belongs more to our present subject. In the early part of the year 1797 three individuals, who had been detected in revolutionary practices in Old Spain, arrived in the town of La Guaira, sentenced to imprisonment for life in one of the forts there. They were persons of great talent and engaging manners; one of them, Picornel, had for his exciting eloquence won from his countrymen the surname of the Spanish Mirabeau; their fame had probably gone before them to the New World; their fate awakened a general sympathy, which extended even to the garrison and the governor of the fort; and the indulgence with which they were treated, and the liberty they were

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allowed of receiving visits and conversing with many of the inhabitants, soon enabled them to make both personal friends and converts to their principles. It so chanced that the popular mind in the province of Caracas, in which La Guaira is, was at the moment in an irritated state in consequence of some harsh proceedings of the police authorities, and certain alleged illegal or unfair exactions of the officers of the customs. In this condition of things it was hoped and believed that the fuel of revolution only wanted to have a light put to it; and a conspiracy was organized, at the head of which were two Creoles, Don Manuel Gual, who had served in the army as a captain of engineers, and Don Joseph de España, the corregidor of the village of Macuto, near La Guaira, both described as among the most distinguished persons in the province for birth and fortune, as well as for talent. But on the evening of the 13th of July, the day before their attempt was to be made, a sudden terror seized one of the conspirators. Demanding to be conducted to the Archbishop, he confessed everything, and put the authorities in possession of the names of his associates, on receiving an assurance that his life should be saved. Both Gual and España made their escape, but seventy-two other persons were immediately arrested; España also was soon taken; and, after the proceedings had been protracted for nearly two years, seven of the prisoners were condemned to death, and five were executed. España was also drawn and quartered at Caracas on the 8th of May, 1799. Thirty-three more were consigned to the galleys; the rest were sent over to Spain, where they were kept in custody till 1802, and then pardoned.

The scheme of Gual and his associates is admitted to have gone the full length of both throwing off the dominion of the mother country, and establishing a democratic republic in imitation of that of the United States, or perhaps rather of some one of the systems that had been tried in France; nor indeed could it well be supposed that the former event would ever take place in any of the Spanish American states without being accompanied or followed by the latter. The only sort of independent government for which the materials existed in any of these States was a democratic republic; unless, indeed, the power of the sword should carry it, and a military dictatorship or absolutism should be set up. This was a consideration which it may be thought would be likely to weigh powerfully in restraining any English minister from being very eager to set the revolutionary spirit in motion. Yet that Pitt had made up his mind to disregard such scruples is sufficiently clear. Immediately after our acquisition of the island of Trinidad in February, 1797, Sir Thomas Picton, the governor, circulated a proclamation on the coast of the neighbouring continent, in which the inhabitants were called upon "to resist the oppressive authority of the Spanish Government," and were assured that measures had been taken "to support them by means of the British naval force, and to supply them with arms and ammunition, merely to enable them to maintain their commercial independence; without any desire on the part of the King of England to acquire any right of sovereignty over them, or to interfere with their civil, political, or religious rights, unless they themselves should in any degree solicit his protection." The writer, also, whom we have chiefly followed in our account of the conspiracy of La Guaira, and who, although somewhat prejudiced, had peculiar opportunities of information, affirms that the moment the island of Trinidad came into our

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Edin. Rev. for
Jan. 1809, pp.
289-292.

possession, we established there a focus of insurrection, with the view of making Spanish America independent. And all this is perfectly consistent with what is related on the best authority of the communications that took place between Pitt and General Miranda shortly after.

It seems to have been in this same year, 1797, that Miranda was waited upon at Paris by several persons deputed from the revolutionary party in Mexico, and other provinces in Spanish America, to consult with him on the measures to be taken for accomplishing the independence of that continent; upon which it was resolved that the General should immediately solicit leave to return to England, with the view of laying their schemes and proposals before the government of this country. The request was at once acceded to by Pitt; and Miranda accordingly came over in the beginning of 1798, bringing with him an instrument drawn up and agreed upon at Paris on the 22nd of December preceding, which began by stating that the Hispano-American colonies, having for the most part resolved to proclaim their independence, were induced to address themselves to the government of Great Britain, in the confidence that she would not refuse them her assistance; and in subsequent articles proposed that a sum of thirty millions sterling should be paid for this assistance by the American States, and that a defensive alliance should be formed between those States, the United States of North America, and England—an arrangement, said the paper, which may be confidently declared to afford the only hope that remains to liberty, audaciously outraged by the detestable maxims avowed by the Republic of France, and the only means of establishing such a balance of power as may be able to restrain the destructive ambition and devastating energy of the French system. This would seem to betoken a parentage for the present scheme different from that of the recent conspiracy of La Guaira and its “Spanish Mirabeau.” Florida was to be ceded to the United States, and all the Spanish West India islands were to be given up, except Cuba. It is stated that Miranda laid this project before Mr. Pitt, at a conference which he had with him immediately after his arrival in England; that it was acquiesced in and adopted by the English minister, and the outline of the proceedings for carrying it into effect fully agreed upon; and that by the month of October the arrangements were so far advanced as that everything depended upon the concurrence of the United States. “The proposal was,” the narrative proceeds, “that North America should furnish 10,000 troops, and the British Government agreed to find money and ships. But the President Adams declined to transmit an immediate answer, and the measure was in consequence postponed.”

We apprehend that no doubt can be entertained as to the substantial truth of this piece of secret history, although the *Edinburgh Review*, in which the particulars originally appeared, afterwards (in its Number for November, 1811) thought proper to speak with disparagement of Miranda and his schemes, but without disavowing any of the statements in its former article. These statements are there in great part supported by documentary evidence, which it is impossible to suspect of being fabricated for the occasion. The facts are also repeated in the work entitled ‘*Colombia*,’ published at London in 1822, on the authority of the son of General Miranda.

The writer in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1809 goes on to state that the scheme of emancipation as projected by Miranda was again taken up by the

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British Government in the beginning of 1801, during the Addington administration; when the plans of government to be recommended to the Spanish American States were considered and approved, and even the military operations sketched and arranged; but, when the preparations for the expedition had been far advanced, the measure was again put a stop to for the present by the Peace of Amiens. "When war," it is added, "was again declared against France in 1803, the business of South America formed one of the principal designs of ministers; and measures were taken to carry it into effect the moment that the peace which still subsisted with Spain should be broken. This event did not occur till 1804, when Mr. Pitt was again at the head of administration. The measure was now prosecuted with zeal; Lord Melville and Sir Home Popham were employed in arranging with General Miranda the whole details of procedure; when the execution was again suspended by the affairs of Europe, and by the hopes and exertions of the Third Coalition." Other accounts of Miranda make him to have in the mean time returned to Paris in 1803, and to have been soon after banished from France by Bonaparte.

He was now importuned by numerous applications from his countrymen residing in exile in the United States and in the island of Trinidad to come over and make an attempt to effect their common object with such means as he could raise on the other side of the Atlantic. He felt secure that at any rate no body of French or Spanish troops would be permitted by the British Government to proceed to America to obstruct his designs; so, thinking in these circumstances that no great force would be required to effect the revolution, and deriving also some hope that the United States would be inclined to assist him, from the disputes then subsisting between that power and Spain respecting Louisiana, "with a full understanding," we are assured, "on the part of the Government here, and even, as it would seem, with promise of support, he proceeded to America." But the turn of events once more for the moment befriended Spain. When Miranda reached the United States, he "found, to his mortification, that a compromise on the subject of Louisiana had already taken place, and that the *public* aid of Government was not to be obtained." He was encouraged, however, to hope that his proceedings would be secretly favoured; and in this persuasion he at last succeeded in inducing a considerable number of persons to join him in fitting out an armament. Urged by the solicitations of the Spanish and French ambassadors, the government of the United States now interposed, and instituted a prosecution against the owner and the captain of an armed vessel in which two hundred volunteers had embarked upon the expedition from New York; but the jury, convinced that the government had been privy to the whole affair, brought in a verdict of acquittal. Other mischances, however, followed; above all, the delay that had occurred enabled the Spanish authorities to obtain precise information as to the point where the attack was to be made, and to make the necessary preparations for defence. Two of his three small vessels having fallen into the hands of the guarda-costas, he put back to Trinidad, and applied for assistance to Sir Alexander Cochrane, the British Admiral commanding on the station, who in the first instance at once ordered some sloops and gun-boats to accompany him on the expedition, and some time after sent him a ship of the line and two frigates, with reiterated assurances of support. He was also permitted to recruit his force both in Trinidad and in Barbadoes. But after some time the

Edin. Rev. for
Jan. 1809, p. 293.

Colombia, ii. 309.

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Edin. Rev. for
Jan. 1809, p. 295.

Colombia, ii. 309.

Admiral wrote to him that, "by recent instructions received from England, he was directed to limit the assistance General Miranda was to receive from him to protection from the naval force of the enemy, to prevent succours being landed, and to secure his re-embarkation in the event of his being obliged to leave the shore." Meanwhile, Miranda had set sail on the 24th of July, 1806, for the coast of Caracas, with a fleet of fifteen vessels, having on board a force of five hundred volunteers. On the morning of the 2nd of August he effected a landing at the town of La Vela de Coro, in the face of a force of 1200 men, composed of Spanish soldiers and Indians, who, after a slight resistance, fled in all directions; and the place, with its forts, guns, stores, and ammunition, fell into his hands. From this point he advanced to the city of Coro, fifteen miles up the country, and containing a population of 12,000, which he entered the next morning; but after some days, learning that troops were collecting to attack him, and finding that the smallness of his force prevented the people from joining him, he deemed it expedient to evacuate Coro, and to return to the coast. He now dispatched an officer to General Sir Eyre Coote and Admiral Dacres, commanding on the Jamaica station, requesting succours; but the answer returned was, that they regretted they could not comply with his application, having received no instructions authorizing them to do so. Soon after, reports, which proved to be unfounded, arrived that preliminaries of peace had been signed by Lord Lauderdale at Paris; upon which Miranda gave up all hope of success, and retired to Trinidad.

Edin. Ann. Reg.
for 1811, i. 371.

It has been asserted that our abandonment of Miranda, or of his schemes, was in deference to the wishes of Russia. From this moment the policy of England in regard to Spanish America assumed a new character. It has been asserted that when plans for attacking Spain in America were laid before the British Government during what is called the Anti-Jacobin War, that is, the war from 1793 to 1801, "they were always discouraged by a distinguished member of the Cabinet, who, knowing the horrors which must necessarily accompany a revolution in those countries, thought rightly that no political interests could justify him to his own heart for spreading the plague;" and that consequently nothing was done or attempted. The facts that have just been detailed show that the discouragement of plans for revolutionizing America, or the avoidance of that mode of annoying Spain, was not the policy of the British Government so long as Mr. Pitt lived. The history of this question exhibits one of the many remarkable instances of how much more influential in directing the course of a political party, at any particular emergency, is usually its position than its principles. It was the Whigs who were formerly always opposed to the policy of encouraging any attempt of the people of Spanish America to throw off the dominion of the mother country. As the close of the seventeenth century saw those who were considered as pre-eminently the guardians and champions of civil and religious liberty the foremost in imposing restrictions and penalties upon the Roman Catholics, and as the early part of the present century saw the same great party, with all its free and popular principles, the systematic apologists, if not admirers, of the tyranny of Napoleon Bonaparte, so the latter part of the last saw the same Whigs courting the friendship of the Russian Autocratess Catherine, and discountenancing the emancipation of Spanish America. The Whig feeling upon this last subject seems to have taken its rise from the course of events in

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our war with our own American colonies. The excitement of insurrection in Spanish America was originally a part of the ministerial policy for carrying on that war, and as such was distasteful to the friends of the independence of English America. Its subsequent adoption by Pitt in the war with revolutionary France, to which the same party were as much opposed as they had been to the preceding war with our American colonies, did not tend to remove or lessen their dislike of it. And thus it happened that the accession of the Whigs to power on the death of Pitt, in the beginning of the year 1806, at once, as we have intimated, completely changed the policy of England upon this subject. The emancipation of Spanish America was distinctly disavowed, by word and by act, as an object to the furthering of which the English Government would give either aid or encouragement. For emancipation was now substituted a new project, that of the conquest of South America. The evidence by which this is proved is conclusive and abundant. About the same time that Miranda was preparing for his attack upon Caracas, Sir Home Popham set out from the Cape of Good Hope on his expedition against Buenos Ayres. It has been said that Sir Home's design had received some countenance from Pitt; but we do not know in what shape it was laid before that minister; we only know that the expedition, as actually undertaken, was altogether unauthorized by instructions from home. Buenos Ayres fell into the hands of the English on the 27th of June; and the capturing force was compelled to surrender to the Spaniards on the 12th of August. So far the disastrous and disgraceful story involves nobody but Sir Home Popham, the sole contriver and conductor of the whole affair. With the events that followed we have nothing to do here, except in so far as the measures directed by the new Whig administration indicated, and the instructions sent out by them declared, the new principles and policy which this country had adopted in regard to Spanish America. Reinforcements were dispatched from England to the Rio de la Plata, under the command of Sir Samuel Auchmuty, in October; and about the same time an expedition was sent to the western coast of South America, with a military force of 4200 men under the command of Brigadier-General Crawford. The reader has seen the proclamation issued by Sir Thomas Picton to the people of Spanish America in 1797, under the direction of Pitt; altogether different and opposite were the instructions now given in "a most secret letter" from the Right Hon. William Windham, Secretary-at-War, to General Crawford. If he should succeed in reducing any part of the American continent, the General was expressly directed to employ all the means in his power, whether of authority or conciliation, to prevent among the inhabitants a spirit of insurrection. All the forms of their former government were to be preserved, subject only to those changes which might be rendered necessary by the substitution of his Majesty's authority for that of the King of Spain. The part, it was added, of the General's conduct requiring most caution would be that which related to the assurances to be given to the inhabitants as to the support which they might expect on the conclusion of a peace; and he was to take the greatest care to go no further than to promise them protection so long as his Majesty's troops should remain in force in the country, and to declare that it would be the anxious wish of his Majesty so to regulate the conditions of any future peace, as to leave them no cause for apprehension. Crawford was afterwards ordered to proceed, not to

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the western coast, but to the Rio de la Plata ; and in March, 1807, an additional force was sent to the same quarter under General Whitelocke. The instructions given to Whitelocke were of the same tenor with those that had been given to Crawford.

Meanwhile, the town of Montevideo had been taken by assault by Sir Samuel Auchmuty on the 3rd of February. A letter written from that place by Sir Samuel to Mr. Windham on the 6th of March exhibits the new system of policy in its effects. Sir Samuel begins by observing that, from the appearances which presented themselves when he first arrived in the country, he had had every reason to believe that the inhabitants were without exception inimical. "Previously to the surrender of Montevideo," he goes on, "I could not place the least confidence in any information I received ; nor did any person superior to the lowest class come over to me. After its capture a sullen silence pervaded every rank ; and for some time the best informed among the principal citizens appeared ignorant of the most trifling occurrences." News then arrived that the Spanish viceroy had been seized at Buenos Ayres by the inhabitants ; and this event, Sir Samuel says, first gave him an insight into the views of many of the leading men, and convinced him that, however inimical they were to the English, they were still more so to their present government. "To the reports," he continues, "of the capture of the viceroy, it was added, that the royal Court of Audiencia was abolished, the king's authority set aside, and the Spanish colours no longer hoisted. These reports were circulated with avidity, and I soon found that they were acceptable to the principal part of the inhabitants. The persons who appeared before hostile and inveterate, now pressed me to advance a corps to Buenos Ayres ; and assured me, if I would acknowledge their independence, and promise them the protection of the English government, the place would submit to me." It was afterwards ascertained that the reports of the suppression of the Court of Audiencia, and of the general overthrow of the Spanish government, were unfounded ; the Spanish party, consisting mostly of natives of Old Spain, yet retained themselves in power. "But it appears," Sir Samuel writes in conclusion, "that there are two parties in that city. . . . The second party consists of natives of the country, with some Spaniards that are settled in it. The oppression of the mother country has made them most anxious to throw off the Spanish yoke ; and, though from their ignorance, their want of morals, and the barbarity of their disposition, they are totally unfitted to govern themselves, they aim at following the steps of the North Americans, and erecting an independent state. If we could promise them independence, they would instantly revolt against the government, and join us with the great mass of the inhabitants. But, though nothing less than independence will perfectly satisfy them, they would prefer our government, either to their present anarchy or to the Spanish yoke, provided we would promise not to give up the country to Spain at a peace ; but, until such a promise is made, we must expect to find them open or secret enemies." Nothing else, indeed, could be reasonably looked for. Gross incompetency, presumption, and rashness made the end of all more lamentable and humiliating than it needed to have been ; but it is not probable that we could have long maintained our position in the country, upon the principle on which its occupation was now attempted, by the ablest management or at any cost. General Whitelocke made his insane attack upon

Buenos Ayres on the 5th of July; and on the next day signed a capitulation, by which he surrendered both that town and Montevideo, and agreed to evacuate South America.

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It does not follow that the Whig policy may not after all have been both the safest and the justest. If the inhabitants of Spanish America were really not ripe for free institutions and fit to govern themselves, to encourage them to rise and attempt to shake off the dominion of the mother country was consistent neither with prudence nor with any higher principle of public morality. All that we would note here is the remarkable contradiction which the case presents in both parties between principle and practice. We have the holders of anti-popular doctrines on the subject of government eagerly evoking and endeavouring to inflame the spirit of insurrection; their opponents as anxiously seeking to suppress it, and in every way evincing their distrust and dread of it. The inconsistency is equal on both sides.

But was not the same thing shown in the general views of the two parties upon the conduct of the war? By whom was the popular resistance to Bonaparte in Old Spain applauded and encouraged? Certainly not by the Whigs. They had little hope that the tide of French aggression could be stayed in any way; none whatever that it could be met and turned in that way. And this brings us round again to the emancipation of Spanish America. It was out of the state to which the mother country was reduced by the French invasion in 1808, that the next movements in that quarter sprung.

The first effect produced throughout all the Spanish American States by the news of that invasion appears to have been a strong feeling of sympathy with the national cause. It is said that the contributions transmitted from America to the Central Junta in Spain during the years 1808 and 1809 amounted to upwards of ninety millions of dollars. Even, however, amid the first general astonishment and enthusiasm, it is asserted that most of the public functionaries, and also many of the Creoles, betrayed considerable hesitation in making choice between their legitimate sovereign and the French emperor, if not a decided inclination to transfer their allegiance to the latter, in conformity with the decree signed by the Council of the Indies. The question seemed to them to be, whether they should hold by the royal family or by the country, by the King or by the kingdom; and those of them at least who were Spaniards born, and had only come to reside for a few years in America, naturally regarded the preservation of the connexion with Europe as the point to which everything else was to be sacrificed or postponed. It mattered comparatively little in their estimation who was King of Spain, if only he were King of the Indies also. The thing to be really dreaded for them was not the union or subjection of Spain to France, but the separation of America from Spain. And even those of the Creoles who believed that the mother country had no chance of escaping from the grasp of Bonaparte had a more perplexed problem than ever to solve in this new position of affairs: if they still shrunk from declaring for the independence of the colonies, it might very well seem doubtful to them whether they would probably be better able to maintain things for the present as they were, by attaching themselves to the Spanish interest or to the French. On the other hand, a separation from the mother country, if it should come, was by no means so sure to prove unfortunate for them as for the government functionaries; and accordingly the great

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body of the Creoles, obeying what was at such a moment the natural impulse of such sentiment of nationality as they possessed, came forward zealously at first in maintenance of the rights of the old royal family. Even from the first, however, it is probable that many of this class were secretly looking forward to the chance which the misfortunes of the mother country might afford of wresting the colonies from her dominion, whoever should ultimately become her king.

It is said that the only one of the viceroys and other chief governors who was not ready to transfer his allegiance to Bonaparte when the news was received of the French occupation of Madrid was Don José Iturrigaray, the Viceroy of Mexico. There is reason to suspect that even he was similarly inclined with the rest in the first instance, but the popular voice calling upon him to preserve his fidelity to his legitimate sovereign was raised with so much energy that he suddenly became extremely patriotic. When the Creoles at length began to clamour for the establishment of a *Junta*, or committee of government, in imitation of what had by this time been done in the mother country, and even for the convocation of a Mexican National Assembly, or Parliament, he seemed to be inclined to accede to both propositions. These proceedings of the Creoles in Mexico appear to have been the first having anything of the character of a popular movement that took place in any of the colonies. They proved fatal to the authority of Iturrigaray. The Audiencia, or court of supreme jurisdiction, deemed the course the Viceroy was taking so revolutionary and dangerous that on the night of the 15th of November they caused him to be seized in his bed, and instantly hurried away to the prisons of the Inquisition.

Ward's Mexico,
i. 155.

The irritation and ill blood, and even the actual disturbances, produced by these events were never allayed in Mexico. The Americans of all classes were from this time united here in opposition to the Spaniards; and although the Creoles generally might not at first contemplate a renunciation of the dominion of the mother country, they were thrown into a position which would be sure to bring them to that conclusion ere long. Everywhere the ayuntamientos, or municipalities, composed of natives of the country, were almost in what might be called a state of revolt against the royal court of the Audiencia; and order was only preserved by means of juntas, or committees, of public security, and armed associations, established by the latter, both these descriptions of bodies being necessarily in such a state of things permitted and encouraged to exercise their powers with very little regard to any forms of law. There was a strange confusion both of names and things. On the one hand the armed bands of Spaniards took to themselves the denomination of *Patriots*; on the other, the two parties, divided and hostile as they were in reality, continued for some time to vie with one another in their clamorous professions of loyalty and attachment to their legitimate sovereign. And in these professions the Americans were probably at first more sincere than the Spaniards; with the latter, attachment to the old royal family was secondary and subordinate to another feeling or principle, that of attachment to the dominion of the mother country; the latter, until they were led or driven to take up the ground of independence, had no other object or sentiment that came into competition with their loyalty, which, indeed, for a short space was provoked to a degree of enthusiasm in great part by the mere spirit of opposition and hatred to the Spanish party.

But all this was soon changed in Mexico, and everywhere else, by the conduct

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of affairs and the course of events both in the New World and in the Old. The French invasion of Spain seemed to be rapidly becoming a complete conquest of the country; nearly every part of which by the beginning of the year 1810 was overrun or kept in awe by the armies of the enemy, and in which, besides, no regular national authority could be said to have existed since the renunciation of the crown by King Ferdinand in May, 1808. Only a succession of so-called Juntas and Regencies had taken upon them or struggled with one another for the name and rights, with however little of the powers, of government. Passing over the preliminary Juntas of Madrid, of Seville, of the Asturias, and others, each of which, though they were all entirely local in their origin, aspired to be recognised as the supreme authority throughout both Spain and the Indies, it will be sufficient to note here that a Central Junta was at last installed on the 25th of September, 1808; that this was followed by the First Regency, established in the Isle of Leon, by this time almost the only unviolated spot in the country, on the 29th of January, 1810; that the Cortes assembled in the same place in September of the same year; and that a Second Regency was nominated by this body on the 18th of October. The tone and demeanour of all these governments to the American colonies was unconciliating, arrogant, and domineering. All the former absolute authority of the crown was asserted and attempted to be maintained with as high a hand as in the palmiest days of the monarchy. The Spanish party was everywhere supported as openly and decidedly as ever against all races and colours of the native Americans. In Mexico, for example, the act of the Audiencia in deposing and arresting Iturrigaray was at once sanctioned by the Central Junta; and the Audiencia was soon after appointed to exercise itself the entire vice-regal authority, which had in the first instance been confided by a temporary arrangement to Lizana, the Archbishop. When it was determined to convoke the Cortes, a representation was indeed affected to be given to the colonies; but, proceeding upon the exclusion of all the inhabitants of mixed as well as of all those of Indian blood, it was regarded as even in theory altogether inadequate and unsatisfactory, and in the actual circumstances it was reduced to a mere mockery; for the pretended colonial deputies were only certain natives of America by chance resident or present at the moment in the town of Cadiz, who were made to elect one another, and some of whom even refused to take their seats. But what produced perhaps the worst effect of all was the conduct of the First Regency in regard to the commerce of the colonies, the restrictions upon which were felt by the body of the people in the American States to be after all their great practical grievance. After having, by a decree issued on the 17th of May, 1810, conceded to the Americans a free trade, under certain limitations, during the suspension of the usual intercourse with the mother country, the Regency was weak enough six weeks after, at the clamour of the merchants of Cadiz, not to repeal or revoke the decree, but actually to deny having ever issued it—to declare it to be spurious, or a forgery, and of no value or effect, and to order all the copies that could be found of it to be burnt! Meanwhile, the assumption and insolence of the government functionaries, and other Spaniards in America, might almost be said to rise and grow more overbearing as the fortunes of the mother country declined. One of the leading members of the Audiencia of Mexico is recorded to have been in the habit of affirming that, as long as a Manchego muleteer or

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a Castilian cobbler remained in the Peninsula, that solitary Spaniard would have a right to govern the Americas.

It does not belong to a History of England to relate in detail either military operations or revolutionary movements and changes, howsoever brought about, in which this country had no part. But in order that the exact state of things in the several countries of Spanish America at the date at which we are now arrived may be clearly understood, it is necessary that we should briefly indicate the general course that events had taken in each of them.

In Mexico, where the spirit of discontent fermented rapidly and to a peculiar bitterness under the violent and exasperating government of the Audiencia, it is said that some attempts were made to concert insurrectionary movements as early as May, 1809, although they were detected in time, and the persons concerned in them apprehended. The standard of revolt was first actually raised in September, 1810, by the famous Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, *cura*, or parish priest, of the little town of Dolores in the province of Guanajuato. In conjunction with Allende, one of three Creole officers in garrison at Guanajuato, of whom he had made converts, and with the co-operation of ten of his parishioners, Hidalgo boldly struck the first blow for liberty and independence on the morning of the 16th of that month, by seizing the persons of seven Europeans resident in the town of Dolores, and distributing their property among his followers. The flame thus lighted, as it was expressed in a representation afterwards addressed to the Cortes of Spain by the Mexican Audiencia, "spread through the country with the rapidity of atmospheric pestilence." In a few hours Hidalgo was at the head of such a force as enabled him to take possession of the town of San Felipe on the 17th, and of that of San Miguel el Grande on the 18th, places each of 16,000 inhabitants. He now took the title of Captain-General of America, and before the end of the month the town of Guanajuato, the capital of the province, was in his possession. He had forced his way into it, assisted by the native population of the place, by whom all the Europeans who fell into their hands after the fight were savagely put to death, all their houses demolished, and all their goods seized and divided. Here Hidalgo set up a mint, and assumed in all respects the authority and state of a chief governor. He remained in the place for above a fortnight, and then marched to Valladolid, which was abandoned by the Spaniards on his approach. Here he found himself at the head of an army of nearly fifty thousand men, and was joined by his old college friend, José Maria Morelos, *cura* of Nocupetaro, destined to play as remarkable a part as himself. But he had already nearly reached the summit and end of his success. When he afterwards marched to attack the city of Mexico, he found formidable preparations made to receive him by the new Viceroy, Francisco Xavier Venegas, who had been installed only two days before the outbreak of the insurrection at Dolores; and, having deemed it prudent to retreat, he was encountered on the 7th of November at Aculco by an army under the command of Felix Maria Calleja, when his fierce but imperfectly disciplined troops were put to rout with immense slaughter. He was afterwards defeated a second time on the 16th of January, 1811, at the Bridge of Calderon, about sixteen leagues from Guadalajara, by the same royalist commander (who took his title of Conde de Calderon from this battle); and, although the *Cura* made his escape from the field, he and three of his officers were, through the treachery of a former

associate, surprised and seized as they were on their way to the frontier of the United States, on the 21st of March, and, being all conveyed to the town of Chihuahua, were there tried, condemned, and shot about four months after.

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Very early in his career the savage and bloodthirsty system of Hidalgo, with whom, besides the ferocity that he permitted in the heat of action and the first flush of triumph, the slaughter of his prisoners and secret assassinations were ordinary proceedings, had disgusted and alarmed the great body of the Creoles, and in several cases when he entered a town these native Americans were attacked and butchered by their Indian fellow-countrymen along with the Spaniards. But his death did not put an end to the insurrection. His place as leader was supplied partly by Morelos, partly by Ignacio Lopez Rayon, styled *El Licenciado* (the Advocate), who had acted as his secretary, and who now took upon him more especially the direction of what may be called the civil department of affairs, holding himself, however, always ready to act in a military capacity also when occasion offered. Under arrangements made by Rayon a Junta, or Central Government, composed of five members, elected by an assembly of the farmers and landed proprietors of the district, was installed on the 10th of September, 1811, in the town of Zitacuaro, in the state of Valladolid. In the scheme for the settlement of the country which this Junta soon after proclaimed, it was proposed that Ferdinand VII. should be acknowledged as sovereign of Mexico, provided he would relinquish his European dominions, and come over and occupy the throne in person; but it is believed that this was a mere profession designed to satisfy the multitude, to whom the insurrection had been all along represented as carried on in the name of the King. It appears to be certain that Ferdinand and all things Spanish were little more to the taste of either Morelos or Rayon than they had been to that of Hidalgo: the real object of all three was most probably the establishment of some sort of republic. The installation of the Junta, however, had a good effect in reviving the attachment of the Creoles to the insurrection, confirming at least such of them as were wavering, if it did not immediately bring back many who had actually gone over to the Spanish party. And after some time, it would appear, the insurgents came to lower their tone, and offered their opponents much more moderate terms than at first. In a manifesto transmitted to the Viceroy in March, 1812, the Junta summed up their proposals and demands as follows:—"If the Europeans will consent to give up the offices which they hold, and to allow a general Congress to be assembled, their persons and properties shall be religiously respected, their salaries paid, and the same privileges granted to them as to the native Mexicans; who, on their side, will acknowledge Ferdinand as their sovereign, assist the Peninsula with their treasures, and regard all Spaniards as their fellow-subjects and citizens of the same great empire."

Ward's Mexico, i.
144.

Meanwhile Morelos, who had on the 25th of January, 1811, a few days after the defeat of Hidalgo at the Bridge of Calderon, by a sudden and brilliant attack scattered a royalist force commanded by Francisco Paris, which had been stationed to defend the town of Acapulco, and taken its encampment, with all the artillery, ammunition, and treasure, had followed up this first success by a series of movements evincing much military science as well as activity, and which had the effect of bringing the scene of action, by the beginning of 1812, within a few leagues of the capital. By this time, too, he had by great

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energy and firmness managed to bring even that portion of his force which consisted of negroes into a tolerable state of discipline. Having taken up his position near the town of Cuautla Amilpas, about twenty-two leagues from Mexico, on the 19th of February, in an action which lasted from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon, he repulsed an attack made upon him by Calleja, who about six weeks before had assaulted and taken Zitacuaro, and inflicted a terrible punishment upon that seat of the Junta, decimating the inhabitants, razing the walls, and burning every house and building in the place, with the exception only of the churches and convents. Morelos then threw himself into the town of Cuautla, and, although the place was according to military rules untenable, defended himself there against all the efforts of Calleja for two months, till he was compelled to withdraw by famine, when he succeeded in carrying off his force through the fire of the enemy, with the loss of less than a score of men. In the latter part of the same year he made himself master first of the town of Tehuacan, and afterwards of that of Oaxaca; and on the 20th of August, 1813, he succeeded in taking Acapulco after a siege of six months. On the 13th of the following month, what was denominated the National Congress commenced its sittings under his auspices in the town of Chilpanzingo; and on the 13th of November this assembly, composed of the five members of the Junta of Zitacuaro, who upon the capture of that place had fled to the town of Sultepec, and of a number of other persons, of whom some were elected by the people of the province of Oaxaca, and others were nominated by these last as representatives of the other provinces, published what it was pleased to call the Declaration of the Independence of Mexico.

But from this point the fortunes of Morelos and of the insurrection began to wane. Having appeared before the town of Valladolid on the 23rd of December, he was encountered the next morning by a strong force under Brigadier Llano and Augustin Iturbide (afterwards Emperor of Mexico), then a Colonel in the Spanish service, and received a complete defeat. On the 6th of January, 1814, he was again beaten by Iturbide at Puruaran. Other disasters followed in rapid succession; the insurgent forces were now worsted in every action; Oaxaca was retaken in the end of March; soon after the Congress was driven from Chilpanzingo; and at last, on the 5th of November, 1815, Morelos was suddenly fallen upon near Tescmalaca by two parties of royalists, and, after fighting till only one man was left by his side, was taken prisoner. He was speedily conveyed to the city of Mexico, and, being there brought to trial and condemned to death, was shot behind the hospital of San Christoval on the 22nd of December.

The insurgent cause never recovered its prosperity after this, till it suddenly revived in altered circumstances, and without further struggle became at once triumphant. The National Congress, which on the 22nd of October in the preceding year had produced the scheme of a Constitution known as that of Apatzingan, in the woods of which place its authors had taken refuge after their expulsion from Chilpanzingo, was, after having transferred itself to Tehuacan, dissolved by Manuel Myer y Teran, the insurgent chief of that district, exactly a week before Morelos had met his fate. The members, it seems, had voted themselves the very handsome salary of eight thousand dollars each;—and General Teran found their continual drafts an intolerable drain

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upon the very precarious resources he had at his command. This act of Teran's, however, destroyed the only common authority and centre of union, such as it was, which the different insurgent commanders recognised; and henceforward the insurrection was without concert, and rather a mere anarchy raging in the country than a great national movement. The most noted of the chiefs, each of whom had his district, which he kept in order or disorder as the case might be, were at first, besides Teran and Rayon, Vicente Guerrero, Nicolas Bravo, and José Maria Fernandez, styled General Victoria. Other distinguished companions of Morelos, who had been cut off before this time, were the Cura Matamoros, Ermenegildo Galeana, and Leonardo and Miguel Bravo, the father and brother of Nicolas; &c. Their names alone, when no more can be given, are some record and memorial of the brave, and will hallow history as well as song. But daring men of a different description also ere long arose to share, under the guise of champions of independence, in the war of licence and plunder—men reckless, unprincipled, rapacious, cruel, and profligate, who only brought dishonour upon the cause for which they pretended to fight, and added to the miseries of their unhappy country. Some of these, indeed, such as Vicente Gomez and the notorious Padre Torres, were properly nothing else than chiefs of bandits upon an unusually great scale. Torres had established what is described as “a sort of half-priestly, half-military despotism,” in the district called the Baxio, “the whole of which,” continues Mr. Ward, “he had parcelled out amongst his Military Commandants,—men mostly without principle or virtue, whose only recommendation was implicit obedience to the will of their Chief. From his fortress on the top of the mountain of Los Remedios, Torres was the scourge of the whole country around: vindictive, sanguinary, and treacherous by nature, he spared none who had the misfortune to offend him, whether Creole or Spaniard, and did more towards devastating the most fertile portion of the Mexican territory, by his capricious mandates for the destruction of towns and villages, under pretence of cutting off the supplies of the enemy, than all those who had preceded him, whether Royalists or Insurgents, during the first five years of the war.” Yet under the protection of this man existed the only government that the Insurgents still kept up, called the Junta of Jauxilla, from its usual residence, the little fort of that name situated in the centre of a marsh, in the province of Valladolid, one of three strongholds which were in the possession of Torres. But, composed as it was entirely of creatures of the Padre, it possessed, Mr. Ward states, little influence and no authority. Thus, by the beginning of the year 1817, the numbers of the insurgents actually in arms had become extremely inconsiderable; and the royalist forces were in possession of all the towns and of nearly all the military stations.

Ward's Mexico, i.
235.

But great changes had also taken place by this time on the royalist side also. The new democratic or liberal Constitution decreed by the Cortes in 1812 for all the Spanish dominions, had come into operation in Mexico on the 29th of September in that year, while Venegas was still viceroy, and at first had seemed likely to prove fatal at once to the existence of the power of Spain in America. Especially after the liberty of the press commenced on the 5th of October, so many violent pamphlets were published, that the frightened viceroy suspended the new law before it had been in force for ten weeks. In their Representation of November, 1813, which we have already had occasion to

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Ward's Mexico, i.
260.

quote, the Audiencia describe the effect produced upon the Americans by the political writers suddenly let loose upon them as having been the same that spirituous liquors cause among savages. "Public opinion was so completely corrupted," they further state, "that in the mobs of the 29th and 30th of November, assembled under the plea of celebrating the election of the electors for the constitutional Ayuntamiento of Mexico, there were Vivas in honour of the Creoles, of the Insurgents, and of Morelos; intermingled with cries of Death to the Government—to the King—to Ferdinand VII." But the unanimity and determination of the national feeling were also indicated by signs much more deeply expressive than the Vivas and seditious cries of mobs. "Out of two hundred and fifty-two elective appointments," Mr. Ward writes, "of more or less importance, which the Mexicans were entitled by the Constitution to make, *not one* was bestowed upon an European; and most were filled by men notoriously addicted to the Independent cause! Nor were the legal forms prescribed by the new system for the prosecution of criminals turned to less account. *Suspensions* were no longer admitted as sufficient ground for depriving an accused Creole of his liberty. *Proofs* were required by the constitutional Alcaldes, whose jurisdiction replaced, in most cases, that of the Audiencia; and these proofs were most critically weighed, by men who had in general been recommended by their known predilection for the cause of the Revolution to fill those offices which enabled them to judge of the inclinations and loyalty of others. Thus, under the safeguard of the new institutions, disaffection became every day more prevalent; and neither the resources of the royal army in the field, nor the exertions of two viceroys, who undoubtedly possessed very superior talents, could give to Spain any prospect of permanently suppressing the Revolution."

Venegas was succeeded as Viceroy by Calleja on the 4th of March, 1813. The Constitution was abolished by Ferdinand VII. on the 4th of May in the following year. On the 18th of August in that year, 1814, a long confidential communication was addressed by Calleja to the Minister of War at Madrid, of which Mr. Ward gives a translation from the original printed in Bustamante's Cuadro Historico, and which is in the highest degree curious, for the picture it draws of the all but desperate state to which the Spanish cause had been already reduced, even in the view of the royalists themselves. Nothing could be more discouraging, Calleja begins by observing, than the aspect of affairs when he took the command of the country: the Constitution had been sworn, and in part established; while "the rebels, flushed with the advantages which they had already obtained, threatened the capital, and were already in possession of Oaxaca, Acapulco, a great part of the western coast, the capital of Texas,—through which they drew supplies from the North Americans,—in short, of the largest portion of New Spain, as well as of innumerable towns, haciendas, mines, and roads." His own situation in these circumstances he describes as most critical; compelled as he was "to make head against the attacks of an enemy disseminated over eight hundred leagues of country, and protected by the great majority of its inhabitants," with only a very small military force at his disposal, and without hope of succour from the Peninsula; while he was also surrounded by concealed enemies, "who," he adds, "under the shelter of the new institutions, aided, directed, and encouraged the rebels, from this and all the other

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principal towns in the kingdom, without my being able to counteract them, on account of the Constitution and the decrees of the Cortes, which tied my hands ; —deprived, too, of the support and assistance which I might have derived from the principal corporations, all of which had been filled by the popular elections with men interested in the ruin of the Spanish Government in this hemisphere.” Happily his military operations had been so fortunate that he had succeeded in destroying Morelos, in recovering Oaxaca, with the port and fortress of Acapulco, and in driving the rebels, with their Anglo-American allies, out of Texas ; a number of the insurgent chiefs had also been taken, some of their principal bands dispersed, and the roads in general so far cleared as to admit of communications being with little difficulty kept up with the interior. But still, Calleja proceeds to intimate, the root and feeding source of the evil remained untouched and unreached : “ I am compelled to confess,” he says, “ that, notwithstanding our victories, but little has been done against the spirit of the rebellion, the focus of which is in the great towns, and more particularly in this capital. . . . For your Excellency must take as the corner-stone of my whole argument the fact, that the great majority of the natives of this country is most decidedly in favour of the insurrection and of independence, without their frequent invocation of the respectable name of our Sovereign being any thing more than a veil with which they endeavour to conceal their criminal projects.”

He afterwards declares that the contagion of the political mania “ seemed to have spread to all classes, drawing alike the merchant, the citizen, the clergyman, and the husbandman, out of their proper spheres, and making them politicians, or rather political dreamers.” Some hope might indeed be entertained of an end being put to these afflicting evils, now that his majesty had returned to his dominions, and the Cortes and its constitution were no more ; but still there were the most serious difficulties to be contended with. “ The disaffected,” continues Calleja, “ are all in favour of the Constitution ; not that they ever really and sincerely intend to adopt it, or to submit to the mother country on any terms, but because it affords them the means of attaining what they desire without risk, and with more facility than they could otherwise expect.” “ Some even of the Europeans,” he adds, “ have wrong views upon this subject, and will not see the danger to which they expose themselves by lending their countenance to ideas which can only lead from disaffection to rebellion.” In short, “ the insurrection,” he affirms, “ is so deeply impressed and rooted in the heart of every American, that nothing but the most energetic measures, supported by an imposing force, can ever eradicate it ; for it is to be observed, that, even if the arms of the rebels prove unsuccessful, and their plots fruitless, still misery, and a growing consumption, will do that which neither force nor intrigue may be able to effect.” . . . “ The military force now at my disposal,” he goes on, “ is but just sufficient to garrison the capitals of the provinces, and to cover the large towns : but, in the mean time, an infinity of smaller towns are left, unavoidably, at the mercy of the banditti ; the roads are ours only as long as a division is passing over them ; and the insurgents, who are infinitely superior to us in number, are masters of the largest proportion of the cultivated lands : the consequence is, that trade is at an end ; agriculture languishes ; the mines are abandoned ; all our resources exhausted ; the troops wearied out ; the loyal discouraged ; the rich in dismay ; in short, misery

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increases daily, and the State is in danger." The armed bands of the rebels are afterwards described as wandering over the whole country, "eating and drinking where they can, and robbing, plundering, and devastating all that falls in their way." The continuation of such a contest, Calleja remarks, is the worst evil that can be experienced, and one that must prove little less ruinous for Spain than for America. "The war," he says, "teaches the insurgents, to our cost, the art of making it with success, and gives them but too good a knowledge of their advantages in point of number and resources. The war strengthens and propagates the desire of independence, holding out a constant hope of our destruction, a longing desire for which (I must again assure your Excellency) is general amongst all classes, and has penetrated into every corner of the kingdom. The war affords the insurgents an opportunity of knowing foreign powers, with whom they form connexions, and from whom they receive aid." While, too, the armies of the king were destroyed in detail, all attempts to recruit them by the usual means were utterly useless. If forced levies were resorted to, the only effect was to fill the royal ranks for a moment, and afterwards to strengthen those of the enemy by the desertion of the newly raised men. Six millions of people decided in favour of independence had no need of consulting together and concerting their measures; every one had merely to act according to his means and opportunities; "the judge and his dependants, by concealing or conniving at crimes; the clergy, by advocating the justice of the cause in the confessional, and even in the pulpit itself; the writers, by corrupting public opinion; the women, by employing their attractions to seduce the royal troops . . . ; the government officer, by revealing and thus paralyzing the plans of his superiors; the youth, by taking arms; the old man, by giving intelligence and forwarding correspondence." To all this was added the systematic opposition of the ayuntamientos, or municipalities, who assisted the common object by giving an example of eternal differences with the Europeans, not one of whom they would admit as a colleague—by refusing any sort of assistance to the Government—and by representing its conduct, and that of its faithful agents, in the most odious light, in specious, however fallacious, protests.

It was, indeed, seemingly as hopeless a case as well could be. In the city of Mexico there had existed, it appears, for three years, an association under the name of "The Guadalupe," composed of men whose situation necessarily gave them a participation in the affairs of the government; and by this club, which kept up a correspondence with every part of the kingdom, all the operations of the rebels were directed, and all the information they could want was supplied to them. In the condition to which affairs had been brought, Calleja sees no chance except in the establishment for a time of martial law, and the immediate commencement of military operations for the re-subjugation of the country on a great scale. A force of six or eight thousand soldiers at the least must, he says, be sent over in the first instance. Not that that number of troops would be nearly sufficient to complete the work; but if, in addition, arms and clothing could be transmitted for twelve or fifteen thousand infantry, and six or eight thousand cavalry, he would hope then, strengthened as he would be, to be able to fill the ranks with men of the country, after he should have struck terror into the minds of the disaffected by a few examples of severity.

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Finally, in any case, he promises for himself that Mexico shall not succeed in throwing off the yoke and withdrawing her obedience from her lawful sovereign, while he is charged with her preservation, if it should be necessary for him, as a last resource, to lay waste the whole country with fire and sword.

The plan recommended by Calleja was followed as far as it was practicable in the present state of the mother country. All throughout this contest with her colonies Spain had made exertions for the suppression of the revolt which might almost have been thought impossible in the condition to which she was reduced. While struggling for her existence as a country, and in the very darkest hour of her fortunes, she had sent one body of troops after another to South America, sometimes when she could hardly be said to have an army on foot at home, or not at least a force sufficient to make head anywhere against her invaders. The conduct of the Government in this particular strikingly illustrated the habitual feeling of the nation on the subject of its colonies, and might almost be said to indicate a conviction, or deep-seated sentiment, that Spain was in truth rather the Indies than the Peninsula. It was the same under the restored absolutism as under the Constitution. In 1815 General Fernando Miyares arrived in Mexico with a royalist reinforcement of two thousand men. This eminent officer was soon after intrusted by the Viceroy with the chief command, both military and civil, of the province of Veracruz, where in the course of the next year he beat the insurgent general, Victoria, in a succession of actions, and, having at last driven him from his principal strongholds, established a chain of fortified posts along the whole ascent to the table-land, which effectually protected that part of the province from his incursions. In this same year, 1816, Calleja was succeeded as Viceroy by Apodaca, who brought with him from Spain a further reinforcement of a thousand men. Discouraged by their reverses, great numbers of the insurgents now accepted the indulto, or pardon, offered by the Government; and by the beginning of the year 1817, although Victoria and some of the other chiefs still withheld their submission, most of their followers had deserted them and laid down their arms, and quiet and order might be said to be restored for the present throughout the viceroyalty of Mexico.

Ward's Mexico, i.
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One of the first districts in Spanish America that assumed a decidedly revolutionary attitude after the French invasion of the mother country, was the province of Quito, in the viceroyalty of New Grenada, which, professing to look upon Spain as having fallen irrecoverably under the dominion of France, set up a separate government for itself on the 10th of August, 1809. But this premature attempt was speedily put down. The forces of the junta which had been established in the city of Quito, fallen upon at once by Amar, the Viceroy of New Grenada, and by Abascal, the Viceroy of Peru, were completely and easily overpowered, and the insurgent government compelled to dissolve itself. It does not seem very probable that, in such circumstances, assurances, as is asserted, should have been given by the victorious royalists that no person should be punished or molested on account of what had been done; but at any rate a considerable number of those who had taken a lead in the movement were arrested and thrown into prison; and there they lay till they were all, or most of them, massacred by the soldiers on the 2nd of August in the following

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Colombia, ii. 326.

year on an alarm being raised that a new insurrection was on the point of breaking out. This calamitous event probably contributed much to give a sanguinary and vindictive character to the whole course of the ensuing contest both in New Grenada and in Venezuela. It so exasperated and inflamed the people of Quito at the moment, that they attacked the troops with knives and sticks; they were fired upon in return; and appearances became so threatening and serious, that the authorities deemed it prudent to publish an act of oblivion, and to send away the obnoxious portion of the military, which consisted of the force that had come from Peru. Soon after this, also, a junta was set up at Quito in the Spanish interest, and was recognised by the Regency at Cadiz, this being, it is said, the only instance of such recognition.

Hist., 316.

Meanwhile, on the 7th of September, 1809, about a month after the first movement at Quito, the Viceroy of New Grenada had convoked in his palace at Santa Fé de Bogota, the capital of the viceroyalty, a number of the principal persons of that city, professing to desire their advice in the crisis. It immediately appeared that the general sentiment of this meeting was in favour of the establishment of a junta at Santa Fé which should act in concert with the Viceroy, and recognise the authority of the Central Junta, the body at this time exercising the supreme powers of government in Spain. Many of the members may have had ulterior views; but either they were not as yet fully formed or matured, or some other reason prevented their being avowed. When they came again, as directed, on the 11th of the same month, they found the guards at the palace doubled; but this show of military preparation is stated not to have prevented some frank and courageous enough debating. It was in the discussions that took place on this occasion that Padilla, Moreno, and other afterwards celebrated patriotic leaders, first distinguished themselves.

Nothing further was done, however, on either side, beyond the suppression of the Independent Government at Quito, till after news arrived from Europe, in the following spring, of the dispersion of the Central Junta and the other events that had followed the irruption of the French armies into the south of Spain. Disturbances now took place in several parts of New Grenada; and at length the people of Santa Fé set up a junta and a government for themselves on the 20th of July, 1810. At first, however, they went no farther than to renounce the authority of the Viceroy; they even acknowledged the authority of the first Regency, established in Spain 29th January, 1810. But after some time they renounced the Regency too, and professed to hold by no part of the old system except the sovereignty of the king. They now published a manifesto inviting the other provinces to send deputies to Santa Fé, to deliberate upon what form of government should be adopted during the captivity of Ferdinand. Most of the other provinces immediately declared in favour of this project; but various causes for some time interfered to prevent the assembling of the proposed Congress. In the first place, in the fervour of the new zeal for separation and independence, not only each province seemed inclined to have a government of its own, but even many of the departments evinced a disposition to break off from their several provinces and to set up for themselves. In particular, Mompo, a department of the province of Carthagena, proceeded to establish a junta and to nominate deputies to the Congress of its own; and it was not till after a military force had been sent against it by Carthagena that the refractory

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department was reduced to submission. This was in January, 1811. Meanwhile, also, the new government at Santa Fé had been attacked or threatened by Tacon, governor of the province of Popayan, and had been obliged to send some troops against him under the command of Baraya, by whom he was beaten in a battle fought on the banks of the river Palace, near the city of Popayan, about the same time that Mompox was compelled to return to its allegiance. Some time after, having fled into Los Pastos, Tacon sustained another and more complete defeat from Rodriguez, the successor of Baraya, near Isquande. The General Congress met at last at Santa Fé, in the spring of 1811; and on the 27th of November following a federal compact was assented to by the representatives of the four provinces of Pamplona, Neyva, Carthagena, and Antioquia. To this arrangement, however, the province of Cundinamarca, of which Santa Fé is the capital, refused to accede; and the junta of that city some time after convened what was called a Constituent Electoral College, which eventually drew up a constitution for the province. This constitution was ratified, and finally adopted, on the 17th of April, 1812.

Colombia, ii. 325.

Before this time, however, the Congress and Cundinamarca were at war. About the end of the year 1811 the office of President of Cundinamarca had been conferred upon A. Narinno, who had long been distinguished as one of the ablest, bravest, and most active friends of the cause of independence. Narinno was opposed to the scheme of a federal government; and we must suppose that on this point the general feeling of his province went along with him. In the first instance, however, the course of the contest was very adverse to Cundinamarca. First, Baraya, and the division of troops he commanded, deserted and went over to the Congress. On this, the province of Tunja, which was about to join Cundinamarca, also went over to the other side; in return for which the Congress immediately transferred its sittings to the city of Tunja. Then Narinno was defeated by Baraya at Palo Blanco. Soon after this the two provinces of Mariquita and Neyva followed the example of Tunja; and Cundinamarca was left alone with Socorro. The Congress now transferred itself to Neyva, on the 4th of October, 1812. After this Narinno sustained a second defeat at Ventaquemada; and then, in December, the forces of the Congress proceeded to lay siege to Santa Fé. But an attempt which they made to storm that city, after having refused to accept of anything less than an unconditional surrender, proved signally unsuccessful; they were not only driven off, but routed and dispersed.

Ibid. ii. 337.

In no long time, however, in the rapid mutations of the intricate and confused story, we find Narinno conducting the united forces of the Congress and of his own province against the Royalists. Ever since the secession of Cundinamarca the province of Carthagena had taken the lead in the confederation. The province of Santa Martha, adjacent to Carthagena, again, was the stronghold of the Royalists, or Spanish party. From these circumstances Carthagena was peculiarly exposed to the machinations and violence of the Royalists. In the course of 1812 two of its departments were wrested from it; but before the end of the year they were both recovered; and even the city of Santa Martha was taken possession of on the 6th of January, 1813, although it was speedily abandoned. It appears to have been soon after this that the Congress and Narinno made up their quarrel, at least for the present, and that Narinno was put at the head of

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the united forces of the two parties, amounting to 8000 men, with the title of Dictator. He now marched to meet the Spanish general Samano, who was on his way to attack Santa Fé, and defeated him, first in a great battle fought at El Alto del Palace, and again at Calibío; after which he set up a popular government in Popayan, and reduced various towns between that city and Pastos. When he had got near the last-mentioned place, however, Narinno was suddenly attacked by a detachment of Royalists, when his panic-struck force was defeated, and he himself fell into the hands of the enemy. This was in June, 1814. Narinno was not put to death, but was sent home to Spain, where he lay in confinement till the revolution of 1820 set him once more at large.

The cause of independence in this part of South America was never in greater danger than now. In addition to various important successes which the Royalists had recently obtained in Venezuela and elsewhere, an army of 10,000 men under the command of General Morillo was about to embark at Cadiz to make, as was thought, utterly vain all resistance to the decree which Ferdinand VII. had issued upon his restoration to liberty, commanding the people of the Indies to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance. Cundinamarca, however, or at least its new president Don Bernardo Alvarez, who had succeeded Narinno, still persisted in refusing to accede to the federal union; and the consequence was that the war between the province and the Congress was renewed. After some ineffectual negotiation, the celebrated Simon Bolivar, who, having been obliged to retreat from Venezuela, where he had been for some time commander-in-chief of the army of independence, had recently arrived at Tunja, in which place the Congress had held its sittings, and had there been immediately proclaimed Captain General of Venezuela and New Grenada, was sent in December 1814 against Santa Fé. He stormed the city and compelled Alvarez to agree to a capitulation, by which Cundinamarca became a member of the federal union. Soon after this the Congress transferred itself to Santa Fé, as being the proper capital of New Grenada.

Although the Congress, however, had all along affected to represent the whole of New Grenada, the transactions that have been related appear to have involved only the twelve provinces belonging to the Audiencia of Santa Fé de Bogota, one of the three composing the viceroyalty. The two provinces of Veragua and Panama, forming the Audiencia of Panama, seem up to this date to have taken little or no part in the revolutionary movement. And the third Audiencia, that of Quito, containing eight provinces, had, ever since the establishment of the Spanish junta there in the latter part of the year 1810, been so circumstanced as not to have it in its power to join that of Bogota if it had been so inclined. The junta had united with the inhabitants of the city in opposing Don N. Molina, whom the Regency had appointed President, when he attempted to enter at the head of the same troops from Lima which had become such objects of detestation for their massacre of the prisoners on the 2nd of August; and their remonstrances had been listened to by the Cortes, which ordered Molina to desist; but Don N. Montes, who had been appointed his successor, after having laid waste all the country as he advanced, forced his way into the place, and then signalized his success by the most frightful revenge, putting to death one in every five of the inhabitants. This is stated to have taken place on the 6th of November, that is to say, we suppose, of the same

Colombia, ii. 360

Ibid. ii. 338.

year 1810. But it may, possibly, have been in 1811; indeed the only account that we have found is so confused, indistinct, and imperfect, that the year can only be guessed at. At all events, from the time of this capture of the capital by Montes, the whole of the Audiencia of Quito appears to have remained in subjection to the Spanish authorities, and to have left the struggle for independence in New Grenada to be waged for some years by the Bogota provinces alone.

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After it had established itself at Santa Fé, in the beginning of 1815, the Congress appointed three persons, M. R. Torices, Garcia Rubria, and M. Pey, to form an executive government. The revolution in New Grenada, we may remark, as in other parts of Spanish America, had long before this date become Anti-Spanish in all respects; opposed not only, as at first, to the old colonial system, and, as in most cases, to the authority of the juntas, the regencies, and the Cortes, which had successively acquired or assumed the supremacy in the mother country, but also to the sovereignty of King Ferdinand, and indeed to any kind of monarchy, as well as to the Spanish connexion under whatever modification. Entire independence and a republican form of government had become everywhere the avowed objects of the struggle. To this point indeed, even if other causes had not operated in the same direction, matters would necessarily have been brought by the attitude maintained by Spain, which left the insurgents no choice except between complete independence and unqualified submission. The three individuals selected to form the executive government of New Grenada were all distinguished for their zealous republicanism. The new system, it is affirmed, worked well and was very popular. The people felt and appreciated the relief arising from the removal of many oppressive regulations and burthensome imposts; and all classes are said to have come eagerly forward with their contributions and offers of service.

Colombia, ii. 361.

This prosperity, however, was but of short duration. As if the hostility of the Spaniards had not been enough, the insurgents had scarcely been left for a moment in quiet when they fell to quarrelling and fighting among themselves. The appointment of Bolivar as Captain-General had been opposed from the first by the province of Carthagena; and it was thought necessary, therefore, as soon as he had taken the city of Santa Fé, that, instead of either marching against the Royalist territory of Santa Martha, or reserving himself to meet the powerful force expected every day with General Morillo from Spain, he should proceed to Carthagena and bring that city to terms. According to some accounts, indeed, this was a movement of Bolivar's own, in violation both of his instructions from the Congress, and of his express promise to that body that he would apply himself in the first instance to the subjugation of Santa Martha. Be this as it may, he actually led his troops against Carthagena, his attempt upon which city, however, he was soon obliged to reduce to a blockade. While the Captain-General of New Grenada was thus occupied, Morillo and his army arrived from Cadiz at the island of Margarita, on the coast of Venezuela, on the 25th of March. Neither this news nor the urgent representations made to him from all sides, nor even the advance of Morillo upon his rear, would move Bolivar to desert his present object. At last on the 8th of May, after the Spaniards had overrun the greater part of the province of Carthagena, he consented to a peace with the authorities in the city; and then resigning the command of his

General Ducoudray Holstein's
Memoirs of
Simon Bolivar,
2 vols. 8vo. Lond.
1830; i. 221.

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army to his cousin, Florencio Palacios, he embarked two days after on board an English brig for Jamaica. Even this arrangement, however, did not put an end to the war of the two factions. Palacios and General Castillo, the commander in Carthagena, soon fell out again; and the state of matters threatened to become as bad as ever. But at last in the latter end of August the siege of the city of Carthagena was formally begun from the sea by Morillo, who had allotted one division of his force to that enterprise, while a second was destined to penetrate into the interior of New Grenada, and a third to reinforce the Spanish troops in Venezuela. The end was that the place was evacuated by the insurgents in the beginning of December. And with its capital, the whole province of Carthagena may be said to have fallen into the hands of the Royalists. Nor was this all. The recovery of the rest of New Grenada soon followed that of Carthagena. There was some more fighting, but the Royalist troops were every where victorious; and at last, in June, 1816, Morillo obtained possession of the city of Santa Fé de Bogota, and the cause of independence was for the present as completely struck down and trodden into the earth in New Grenada as in Mexico. Yet here too, although nothing that could be called an insurgent army any longer kept the field, guerrilla bands continued to infest all the more inaccessible parts of the country, and except in the great towns the nominal re-establishment of the royal authority had produced rather an anarchy than a government.

VENEZUELA.

The quarter in which the war of independence was exciting the greatest attention in England and in Europe at the date at which we are now arrived, was Venezuela. Venezuela was, as we have seen, the native country of Miranda, and had been the chief theatre of his operations, actual and intended. It was here, also, that the conspiracy of Gual and España had been formed in 1797. The revolutionary spirit, indeed, is said to have shown itself in Venezuela long before any of these attempts, and before any thing similar had taken place elsewhere in Spanish America. According to a statement given in a pamphlet published in 1803 by the well-known Governor Pownall, entitled ‘Memorial addressed to the Sovereigns of Europe and the Atlantic,’ this spirit, the progress of which the writer had long watched with anxious attention, had first broken out into actual insurrection or decided revolt in Peru and New Grenada in 1781, in Mexico in 1773, in Quito in 1764, and in Venezuela in 1750. Venezuela, therefore, may properly be called the cradle of the revolution. Pownall, by the bye, in this pamphlet, claims an important share in the plan of emancipation which was submitted to Pitt in 1790.* The author of the work entitled ‘Colombia,’ states that it was by Pownall that Miranda was introduced to Pitt. Pownall’s own account is, that, the subject having long engaged his attention, when an opportunity of carrying his views into effect now seemed to present itself, he not only gave his assistance in devising the measures by which the emancipation was to be attained, but arranged the plan of an independent sovereign government for the emancipated states, “suited to the existing circumstances of the people and the country; clear of all democratic anarchy on one hand, and secured against the dangers of despotism on the other.” The Governor’s notion, it may be remarked,

* See *ante*, p. 86.

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was, that the direction and result of the revolutionary movement in the Spanish American colonies would prove monarchical, not republican; or, as he himself expresses it, "The falling off of South America will be conducted, in its *natural* progress, by the spirit of some injured enterprising genius taking the lead of a sense of alienation, and of a disposition of revolt, to the establishment of a great monarchy." It cannot be said to be yet certain whether this judgment be right or wrong. Pownall, writing in 1803, declines to explain the details of his plan. "The matters, however," he says, "have been suffered, somehow, to transpire beyond their original bounds; an echo of it vibrated amongst the officers employed on the expedition to Holland; and we are told by Sir Robert Wilson that 'Italy and Spanish America for some time occupied Sir Ralph Abercromby's attention' before he received orders to proceed to Egypt. That such a plan existed is well known at Paris and Madrid, and not unknown at Vienna." The writer of the article, already more than once referred to, on Miranda's efforts and projects for the emancipation of Spanish America, which appeared in the 'Edinburgh Review' in January, 1809, affirms that the administration of the Duke of Portland, which succeeded that of Lord Grenville in 1807, and which Miranda found in power when he returned to England in that year after his unsuccessful attempt upon the coast of Caracas, was "prepared to embark in the scheme with real energy." "After various delays," it is added, "a force was at last assembled; and it has been oftener than once publicly stated, we believe with perfect accuracy, that the expedition which was prepared at Cork last summer, and which was to be commanded by Sir Arthur Wellesley, was intended to co-operate with Miranda in the long projected measure of emancipating South America; and, had not the extraordinary revolution which broke out in Spain given to those forces a different destination, it is probable that, by this time, that important measure would at length have been accomplished."

It has been already stated that, on the occupation of Spain by the French armies in 1808, all the different authorities which competed with one another for the supremacy in that country sent out their manifestoes and agents with the view of securing the adherence and support of the colonies. In the first instance, their allegiance was sought for at once by Murat, acting as Lieutenant-General of Spain and the Indies, in the name of Charles IV.; in the name of Ferdinand VII. by the Junta or Council installed by him at Madrid before his departure for Bayonne; by the Junta of Seville; and by the Central Junta at Cadiz. Afterwards, when Joseph Bonaparte had been proclaimed king, and the authority of the Central Junta had come to be generally recognised, the struggle grew to be simply and distinctly between Joseph and Ferdinand, between the foreign interest and that of the nation, or, as it might be most truly and comprehensively expressed, now that the cause of the Spanish patriots had been taken up by this country, between France and England. In July, 1808, a French brig, dispatched by Bonaparte from Bayonne, arrived at Laguaira, which is the port of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, with secret instructions and other papers addressed to the Captain-General, Don Juan de Casas, from whom, and also, it is said, from the inhabitants of Caracas, a small military detachment sent out some time previous by Murat, had met with a very kind reception. The brig, which had touched at Cayenne, had been observed by Captain Beaver, commanding the English frigate *Acasta*, who immediately gave

General Ducon-
dray Holstein's
Memoirs of Bol-
livar, i. 93, &c.

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chase; and about an hour after the French captain had had his audience of Casas, and been most graciously received, the active Englishman presented himself. He was told that he had come at a bad time, and might call again in two hours. Beaver employed the interval to good purpose. Addressing the people in the streets, he informed them of the proceedings of the French in Spain, of which till now they had known nothing; and it was not long before an enthusiastic throng was bearing about in triumph the portrait of Ferdinand VII., and making the air ring with their loyal *vivas*. The picture was deposited at last with great solemnity in the government house, where it was all the night surrounded with lights and with crowds of visitors; the French captain with difficulty escaped from the city with his life; and a few days after he and his brig were captured by Beaver, as he was making the best of his way from the coast.

This was a good beginning; and it was followed by the entire failure of attempts subsequently made by Bonaparte to induce the people of this and other parts of America to acknowledge his brother Joseph for king, in conformity with the circulars dispatched to all the viceroys and captain-generals by the Council of the Indies. Joseph's proclamations were everywhere torn in pieces; his agents were driven out of the colonies, and some of them put to death. England, however, was now placed in a different position from what she had formerly occupied when interfering or proposing to interfere in the affairs of Spanish America. Being at peace with Spain, she was of course precluded from pursuing her old policy of endeavouring to excite the colonies to the assertion of their independence. But for the moment it did not seem that that mattered much. Independence, or emancipation, had apparently ceased to be the object of the colonists themselves; the popular cry now, in America as in the mother country, was directed only against France and King Joseph; the Spanish connexion and the sovereignty of Ferdinand had become the national rallying words. All that was required, for the present at least, was to cherish these feelings, and to support the colonies in acting upon them. Accordingly, orders were sent out to Sir James Cockburn, the Governor of Curaçoa, to proceed immediately to Caracas. "His secret instructions, which I have from good authority," says General Ducoudray Holstein, "were to employ every imaginable means to diminish and destroy the influence of the French party; secondly, to watch and prevent this party from getting the upper hand, and wresting the colonies from Spain; thirdly, to endeavour to establish a provisional government favourable to King Ferdinand VII., without engaging himself in any other concerns relating to the administration and interior affairs of the government of the country." Casas now felt himself compelled to yield to the prevailing sentiment. He hastened to Lagunaira to meet Sir James with a numerous and brilliant retinue. By the people the representative of the English government was received with rapture, and even with regal honours. Public opinion, General Holstein tells us, was entirely changed in favour of England; and the aversion to the dominion of France was so great, that he saw many gold and silver French coins which had the bust of Bonaparte pierced with the point of a dagger or knife, and his portraits cut in pieces. The progress of Sir James Cockburn from Lagunaira to Caracas was a sort of triumph. "His entry into the capital," continues the General, "was not less solemn than would have been that of the

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king himself. All was joy, bustle, and enthusiasm; the city was spontaneously illuminated; dinners, festivals, balls, &c., succeeded, during the whole time of his stay; and the exclamations, 'Long live our beloved, our cherished King Ferdinand VII., and the English, our good and generous allies!' were heard throughout the streets." The Captain-General now published a long proclamation calling upon the inhabitants of Venezuela formally to acknowledge Ferdinand as the new King of Spain and the Indies.

At heart, however, Casas was believed to be in favour of King Joseph and the French; and, as it would seem, upon good grounds. Immediately before the arrival of Sir James Cockburn he had thrown into prison the Marquis del Toro, the Marquis de Casa Leon, and other persons belonging to some of the first families in Caracas, for having drawn up, and circulated among their friends for signature, a memorial or petition merely proposing the establishment of a junta for the government of Venezuela in the name of King Ferdinand, of which the Captain-General should act as president. Public opinion, however, expressed itself so strongly against this arbitrary act, that they were soon released. And not long after the Central Spanish Junta, though it might not have relished the project of the colonial junta much more than Casas did, yet looking upon his recently assumed patriotism as somewhat suspicious, replaced him by another Captain-General, Don Vicente Emparan. Emparan, who is admitted to have been well-intentioned, as well as a man of some talent and of very engaging manners, arrived at Laguaira on the 24th of March, 1809.

But the views and feelings, whatever may have been as yet their exact nature, which had dictated the proposition for the establishment of a supreme domestic government during the disturbed state of the mother country, continued to strengthen and spread; and, especially after the accounts received in the beginning of 1810, that the Peninsula was all but completely in the possession of the armies of France, they had become general among all classes, with the exception of the official functionaries. At last, on Maundy Thursday, the 19th of April, in that year, the revolution broke out. Emparan and all the members of the Audiencia, having been first compelled to sign their own abdication, were some of them sent to prison, whence they were soon after transferred by sea to the United States, others ordered into confinement in their own houses till they should signify that they were ready to leave the country; while the new government was proclaimed and installed under the title of the Provisional Junta of Venezuela, Conservatrix of the rights of His Majesty King Ferdinand VII.

This movement in the capital of the country was immediately responded to in most of the other provinces, but not with perfect accordance in any, unless it may have been in Barcelona and the isle of Margarita, of the proceedings in which we find nothing stated. Guayana established a junta which at first acknowledged the authority of the Supreme Junta at Caracas; but, being composed of a majority of Spaniards, soon afterwards transferred its allegiance to the Regency of Cadiz. The juntas of Cumana and Varinas sent deputies to Caracas, but only to declare that they could not recognise the new government there established, and to demand the convocation of a General Congress. When the commissioners from Caracas presented themselves before Don Fernando Miyares, the Governor of Maracaibo, he ordered them to be gone with violent menaces; and they were still worse treated by Cevallos, the governor of Coro,

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by whom they were seized and shipped off to Porto Rico, and were there put in irons, till after some time the earnest intercession of the English Admiral, Sir Alexander Cochrane, effected their liberation.

The policy that the English government intended to pursue with reference to the Spanish American colonies was distinctly stated in a letter addressed by the Earl of Liverpool on the 29th of June, to Brigadier-General Ledyard, the Governor of Curaçoa, to whom the Junta of Caracas had early transmitted an official communication of the events that had taken place in that province for the information of his government, accompanied with a request that he would afford them his countenance and protection. Lord Liverpool, after observing that "it was the first object of his Majesty, on being acquainted with the revolution in Spain, to second the efforts of so brave and loyal a people for maintaining the independence of the Spanish monarchy in all parts of the world," proceeded;—"In conformity to these sentiments, and the obligations of justice and good faith, his Majesty must discourage every step tending to separate the Spanish provinces in America from the mother country in Europe. If, however, contrary to his Majesty's wishes and expectation, the Spanish State in Europe should be condemned to submit to the yoke of the common enemy, whether by real compulsion, or a convention that should leave only the shadow of independence, on the same principles his Majesty would think it his duty to afford every kind of assistance to the provinces of America that should render them independent of *French Spain*, open an asylum to such of the Spaniards as should disdain to submit to their oppressors, regard America as their natural refuge, and preserve the remains of the monarchy to their lawful sovereign, if ever he should recover his liberty." "It was," his lordship added, "a satisfaction to his Majesty to learn by papers he had received, that what had passed in Caracas was in a great measure owing to the erroneous impressions they had received of the desperate state of Spain. These being removed, the inhabitants of Caracas would be disposed to renew their connexions with Spain, as integral parts of the empire, on their being admitted to take their place in the Cortes of the kingdom."

Intimation of the change of government had also been made by the Provisional Junta of Venezuela, as it called itself, to the Spanish Regency, of submission to whose authority, however, nothing was said; and this and the other intelligence received from the colonies produced a decree or manifesto from that body, dated at Cadiz the 18th of August, in which all the provinces of Venezuela, with the exception of Maracaibo and Coro, were ordered to be treated as in a state of revolution and rebellion, their coasts declared to be in a state of blockade, and the determination expressed "to use every means to stop the evil in its origin, and prevent its progress." At the same time Don Ignacio Cortavarria was sent out to Porto Rico with the title of Commisionado Regio, and with full authority to employ every available means for the reduction of Venezuela to its former subjection.

Meanwhile, the new government at Caracas had already commenced the reform of some of the most oppressive abuses of the old system. The tribute or capitation tax levied upon the Indians was abolished; the slave-trade was declared illegal; immediate relief was given to commerce by the removal of the

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alcabala, or tax upon sales, and of other duties; and decrees were passed in favour of the general freedom both of trade and agriculture.

Cortavarria began his operations with an endeavour to produce a counter-revolution by a series of proclamations addressed to the people of Caracas. Finding that this method promised little success, he next had recourse to the agency of emissaries and spies. But before the end of the year the contest had become one of arms. Miyares, the former governor of Maracaibo, had been nominated by the Regency Captain-General in room of Emparan; both he and Cevallos, governor of Coro, had joined Cortavarria; and by their influence and intrigues disturbances had been excited in several parts of the country. In these circumstances the Marquis del Toro was placed by the government of Caracas, with the title of General-in-Chief of the Army, at the head of a body of troops, with which he entered the province of Coro on the 18th of November. But the movement proved indecisive, or rather quite unsuccessful; and the Marquis, after a precipitate advance, in which he had neglected to take measures to maintain his communication with Caracas, was glad to make a still more precipitate retreat, which he accomplished with considerable difficulty.

In this state affairs were, when about the end of the year news came of the arrival at the island of Curaçoa of General Miranda: he had left London in October. Nothing could have been less expected by all parties, and it may be doubted whether the reappearance of the champion of independence on his old field was most embarrassing to the Spanish or to the American party. The Junta had instructed their agents and friends in England to use all their influence to prevent the General from coming over. They still professed to act in the name or in the interest of King Ferdinand: Miranda had all along been opposed to the Spanish dominion and the Spanish connexion in every shape. The leaders of the present movement, too, may not have much enjoyed the prospect of sharing their power and consequence with a rival of so much talent and popularity. It would appear that they were even prepared to employ force to keep him out of the country; so that he found it expedient to slip quietly out of England without any attendants, and to conceal his name till he reached his native country. General Holstein says that he came to Curaçoa under the name of Martin; but bringing letters of introduction to the Governor from the Duke of Cambridge and Mr. Vansittart. He was soon after conveyed in an English vessel to Laguaira; and there and in the city of Caracas he was welcomed by the people with tumultuous rejoicing, and with a succession of fêtes, which lasted for many days. According to Holstein it was Miranda's influence that decided the question of having a Congress. Yet it may be doubted if he was, in existing circumstances, disposed to push the revolution so far as even the Junta would have done. He had apparently come to Venezuela with the sanction of the English government, whose present policy, as we have seen, was altogether opposed to the separation of the colonies from the mother country. When a committee, of which he was one, was appointed to draw up the scheme of a constitution, he is stated to have stood alone in proposing one closely resembling the former colonial system. It is affirmed indeed to have been the same that he had intended to have presented to the South Americans if his expedition in 1806 had proved successful; but this seems not very credible. "It was," says Holstein, "as instructed and able men have assured me,

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adapted to the spirit and character of the people." But he acknowledges that it created Miranda many enemies. It did in fact expose him to the suspicion of being a less zealous friend of liberty than he had formerly been esteemed, if not of being an emissary of England, and of having designs which for the present he could not safely avow. It is not at all probable that there was any justice in these surmises; Miranda may have so far been swayed by the change of circumstances as to have been willing, for the sake of securing the countenance of England, to postpone his project of separation and independence, and to use his influence in favour of a moderate course; but his subsequent conduct sufficiently shows that he had given up none of the objects or principles to which his previous life had been devoted. Holstein assures us that he himself treated the murmurs against him with contempt, and that they did not affect the attachment of the wiser portion of the patriots. It is evident, indeed, that he lost little either of popularity, or even, however reluctantly it might be accorded, of ascendancy with the Junta; for he was not only returned as one of the members to the Congress (for the town of Pao in the province of Barcelona), but was, before the meeting of that body, nominated by the government Commander-in-Chief of all the Land and Sea Forces of the State.

Colombia, ii. 322.

Whatever may have been the views, either of Miranda or of the Junta, the tide of events had now evidently set in for complete revolution. General Ledyard, the governor of Curaçoa, upon receiving Lord Liverpool's letter quoted above, had dispatched his secretary, Colonel Robertson, to Caracas to endeavour to prevail upon the Junta to acknowledge the Regency of Cadiz; but the feeling of the colony was found to be such that Robertson did not think it prudent even to mention the object of his mission. Some time after, or about the beginning of 1811, an embassy was sent from Caracas to the Junta of Santa Fé, and a treaty of alliance concluded between the two governments. On the 2nd of March, 1811, the Congress assembled at Caracas. On the 4th of April three persons were nominated by this body to form the executive government, with, however, very limited powers. At last, on the 5th of July, it was moved and carried that Venezuela should be declared to be a Republic, free and independent of any foreign dominion; and the Act or Declaration of Independence was published on the 11th of the same month.

On the same day, however, an insurrection of the Spanish party, calling themselves *Islenos* (that is, Islanders, from many of them having, it seems, been born in the Canary Islands), broke out in one of the suburbs of Caracas. It was not suppressed till Miranda had put himself at the head of an armed force, and what is described as an obstinate battle had taken place, in which the *Islenos* were worsted, and many of them made prisoners. It is not said, indeed, that any body was killed on either side in the fight; but sixteen of the captured *Islenos* were shot in the course of the same month. Then the inhabitants of the City of Valencia revolted; and against them was sent first the Marquis del Toro, and afterwards Miranda, who did not succeed in reducing the place till he had made two attempts to storm it, in the first of which he was repulsed. According to one account, when he at last effected his entry on the 18th of August, he put both the garrison and the greater part of the unarmed population to the sword. Other accounts merely speak of ten of the ringleaders in the insurrection having been some time after put to death. Both statements may

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possibly be true. From all this it is very evident that the feeling in favour of republicanism and independence was by no means universal as yet either throughout Venezuela or even in the province of Caracas. The Congress, nevertheless, proceeded with its work, and at last on the 23rd of December produced the scheme of a constitution. It established a federal government for Venezuela, imitated from that of the United States; the principal arrangements being, that the legislative body should consist of a House of Representatives, to be returned by the electoral colleges, or popular constituencies, and a Senate, to be elected by the provincial legislatures; and that the executive power should be vested in three persons, to be nominated by the electoral colleges. The Roman Catholic religion, however, was declared to be the religion of the State; and, along with a proclamation of the sovereignty of the people and the rights of man, was introduced a provision that no foreigners should be permitted to reside in the country unless they would respect the national faith.

This constitution appears to have been accepted, or assumed to have been accepted, by the people; and the Congress commenced its second session in the subjugated town of Valencia, in March, 1812. At this time, it is affirmed, everything wore a prosperous and promising aspect. The government was popular; actual opposition was everywhere put down; the military force of the State was respectable and efficient; the commerce of the country flourished; and, naturally enough, the people were contented. In the preceding year the anniversary of the revolution had been celebrated with illuminations, fêtes, and other public and private rejoicings. That year the 19th of April had been taken as the great day, without any regard to the church festival of Maundy or Holy Thursday, although it was, it must be confessed, the procession occasioned by that holiday which had given the leaders of the revolution the opportunity of effecting their design. In the present year, 1812, Holy Thursday fell on the 26th of March; and on that afternoon one of the most dreadful earthquakes ever known in South America laid the city of Caracas in ruins. The shock, which took place a few minutes after four o'clock, lasted nearly two minutes, and threw down between four and five thousand private houses, and about twenty churches and convents, together with all the other public buildings and monuments. The port of Laguaira was also nearly overwhelmed, and various other places in the province shared in the calamity. The number of lives destroyed is said to have amounted altogether to nearly twenty thousand. In the city of Caracas the churches were crowded at the moment with persons preparing to join in the very procession which had been taken advantage of to bring about the revolution two years before at the same hour.

A superstitious people naturally saw in this terrible event, and remarkable coincidence, a condemnation of the revolution by heaven, and an outpouring upon their heads of the Divine wrath and vengeance. The clergy, of course, the majority of whom were disaffected to the new system, did their best to deepen this conviction. The effect in detaching the popular mind from the cause of independence is said to have been immense. In short, to the earthquake is mainly attributed the failure of the revolution in Venezuela at this stage of its progress. It is evident, however, that other causes contributed, and that things had been beginning to go wrong in some respects before this. General Holstein, in noticing the satisfied and excellent temper of the public mind at the

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one of the first anniversary of the revolution, in April, 1811, confesses that this state of things did not sustain long. "After a while," he says, "the government sunk into indolence the natural result of a too greatly restrained executive power. It had neither authority nor energy. The Congress was perplexed, and uncertain what means to employ in order to give more strength and consistency to its government." The government paper-money, too, it is admitted, had become depreciated before the earthquake, though it was not till some time after that it became entirely worthless. And what was most serious of all, the Spanish troops had already for some time been making considerable progress in the recovery of the country. The General of the Corps, Domingo Monteverde, was lying before the town of Caracas on the day of the earthquake, and immediately attacked and took it. He soon after reduced in like manner Pampalona, Aragua, and San Carlos; moving, it is said, with little or no opposition, "while bodies of the patriot army deserting to him wherever he made his appearance." Soon after, in June, Porto Cabello, the strongest fortress in Venezuela, and the place to which all the provisions of war had been regularly sent, and in which the principal stores of arms and ammunition belonging to the republic were deposited, fell into his hands. It had been invested, about nine months before, at the charge of Simon Bolívar, being the first command ever sent by that afterwards celebrated personage. Bolívar, born in 1783, in the city of Caracas, of one of the most opulent families in Venezuela, had been sent to Madrid for the completion of his education at the age of fourteen, and, after visiting all the principal countries in Europe, had returned to Venezuela in 1800 in the same fleet which brought over the new Captain-General Emparan. He then held the rank or title of lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish army, and brought with him a young and beautiful wife, whom he had married at Madrid in 1802. She died, however, soon after. Bolívar did not take part in the revolutionary movement in the first instance, but he was soon after persuaded to give in his adhesion; and, having accepted from the junta a militia colonel's commission, he proceeded in association with another individual on a mission to London to solicit the support of the English government. He set out in June, 1806. After a short stay in London, finding his object unobtainable, he returned to Caracas; and in September the following year he was appointed to the command of Porto Cabello. According to General Holsten he had for some time after his return declined all military service, but was at last persuaded by Miranda to accept this command, together with the rank of lieutenant-colonel of the staff in the regular army. The loss of Porto Cabello was brought about by an insurrection of the prisoners, by whom the garrison were overpowered. Bolívar and most of his officers made their escape; and the next day Monteverde entered and took possession of the place. This event was followed by a treaty concluded between Monteverde and Miranda on the 20th of July, in which it was stipulated that the Constitution presented by the Cortes to the Spaniards should be introduced in Venezuela, and recognised by the inhabitants; but that no person should be punished or molested on account of former political opinions or conduct, that a general amnesty or act of oblivion should be passed, that all private property should be held sacred, and that all who desired to quit the country should be freely permitted to do so. The historians written in the interest of the revolution say that thus the province of

Caracas came again into the possession of the Spaniards. But in point of fact, all the other provinces appear to have been previously recovered: so that the authority of the Cortes was now established throughout all Venezuela. It is admitted that the Venezuelan republic, including junta, or executive, congress, military force, and everything else, was for the present entirely put down.

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Miranda, p. 20

Boswell, p. 100

This proved also the end of the career of poor Miranda. In their alarm, according to our account, the Congress had shortly before this organization nominated him dictator, authorizing him, after the old Roman form, to act in all things as he should in the emergency; judge to be most for the good of the country. He had been forced to evacuate first the town of Valencia, then a strong post in the neighbourhood called La Cabaña—the inhabitants of which, it appears, notwithstanding his presence, declared for the royalists;—and had then retreated to La Victoria, where he was when he received the news of the loss of Porto Cabello. It was at La Victoria that the treaty with Monteverde was arranged. He then proceeded to Caracas, with the intention of leaving the country by the English schooner *Sapphire*, Captain Haynes. On the afternoon of the 26th of July he arrived, heated and fatigued, at the house of Lieutenant-Colonel Manuel Maria Casas, the republican commandant of Lagunaira, who had not yet been relieved by a Spanish garrison. A large company was assembled to receive him; among the rest being, besides Casas, Doctor Manuel Perna, Civil Governor of Lagunaira, Bolívar, and Captain Haynes. The Spaniards prevailed upon Miranda, notwithstanding Haynes's objections, to remain where he was till morning; and then, in the middle of the night, Perna, who is said to have been the mover of the plot, Casas, and Bolívar, accompanied with four armed soldiers, entered his bedroom, and seized him as he lay asleep. Having compelled him to walk with them to a fort in the neighbourhood of the town, they there had him put in irons, and then dispatched an express to Monteverde, informing him of what they had done. There is no reason to suppose that there had been any previous concert with the Spanish General: but he gave no directions to liberate the prisoner. The next day a Spanish garrison took possession of the fort where Miranda was, by the Commandant of which he was sent back, but still in fetters, to Lagunaira. Here he lay in confinement for some months, and was then sent to Porto Rico, whence he was transported to Cadix; and there he was detained in close imprisonment in the fort of La Carrera, till death put an end to his sufferings in 1816.

Bolívar and his associates in this transaction professed to have proceeded upon the assumption that Miranda had been a traitor to the republican cause, having been employed and sent out for the purpose of ruining it by the English government: and they may possibly have entertained such a belief. But although Miranda had many influential friends in this country, where he had been so long known, and even the Government, existing in the moderation of his principles, may not have been sorry that the revolutionary movement should have fallen under the guidance of such a man, the notion that the English government had any part either in dispatching him upon his last visit to Venezuela, or in directing or influencing his course after he got there, may be safely pronounced to be an entire delusion. Even General Holstein, with all his prejudices against England, and diseased suspicion of her habits of intrigue and working in the dark, does not credit this imputation. It rests in fact upon

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nothing stronger than the simple circumstance of Miranda having come to the country in one English vessel, and having arranged to leave it in another. There can be no reasonable question but that he was to the end of his public career, as he had been from the first, the sincere friend of the emancipation of the colonies, although his views may not have been so ardently democratic as those of most of the younger and more inexperienced spirits with whom he found himself associated in his last enterprise, and although also when he set out upon that attempt he may, in the changed state of things in Spain, have been prepared to submit, if necessary, for the present, to the continuance of a connexion with the mother country which could be little more than nominal, and have implied no real subjection, if he could have secured such a reform in the system of the colonial government as would have produced most of the substantial benefits of freedom. Submission to the Cortes and the Constitution was a very different thing from submission to the old monarchical absolutism. But, with his peculiar views and principles, which were not precisely those of any of the contending parties at that particular moment, Miranda, after his capitulation to Monteverde, in July, 1812, could count upon no rescue from any quarter if he should once chance to be thrown down, or to fall into the hands of any faction of his personal enemies, of whom he is said to have made many by the haughtiness of his demeanour, and the open contempt he expressed for the hot-headed and incompetent persons with whom he had to co-operate, as well as by the envy which his popularity excited. He was too little of a democrat for his republican fellow-countrymen, and too much of one for either the Spaniards or the English. Denounced as a traitor by the independent leaders in Venezuela, he had undeniably borne arms against the Cortes, and had been as indisputably opposed all his life to the royalist party in Spain, and had by the course of events and his recent position lost whatever claim he might previously have had upon the protection of the English government. He was consequently left to perish, apparently without an effort being made to save him.

The overthrow of the republican government neither restored peace and order in Venezuela, nor gave more than a momentary check to the revolution. Monteverde, who had been appointed Captain-General, is described as a man of no talent or force of character, and his government soon became a mere anarchy. "Each commander of the smallest detachment," says General Holstein, "followed his own will and caprice. The vast territory of Venezuela was again the theatre of murders, cruelties, and every sanguinary deed, committed without the consent of Monteverde, who, if he heard them when some few dared to complain, could not afford them any redress, his authority being usurped by these chiefs, who despised his weakness, and did everything according to their own will and pleasure." The consequence was, that detestation of the Spanish régime now spread faster than ever, and the popular feeling throughout Venezuela soon became ripe for a new insurrection. Leaders were not wanting. Before the end of the year 1812 San Jago Marinno, a young student of the city of Cumana, had again raised the standard of liberty and independence, and, after having repulsed an attack made upon his head-quarters at Maturin by Monteverde, had assumed the title of General-in-Chief and Dictator of the Eastern provinces of Venezuela. Meanwhile, in the beginning of the year 1813, Bolivar, who had found his way to Carthagena, had entered the country from

the opposite side at the head of a considerable force, consisting partly of volunteers raised in New Grenada, partly of regular troops supplied by the Congress of that State.

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In the fierce and sanguinary contest that followed, all the usages of civilized warfare were disregarded on both sides. And it may be doubted on which side most of the blame lies of having commenced this barbarous system. It appears to be admitted that the war to the death—*guerra a muerte*—was first proclaimed in a manifesto, signed and published by a number of Bolivar's officers, on the 16th of January, while they were advancing into Venezuela, and before any encounter had yet taken place. The authors of this paper (which was not signed by Bolivar) alleged as their ground and justification the oppressions and cruelties that had been practised by the Spaniards on many of the inhabitants of Venezuela, in violation of the late convention. On the other hand, the actual practice of putting the prisoners to death seems to have been begun by the Spaniards; they quoted the above-mentioned proclamation as their excuse; and the first execution of the kind included Colonel Bricenno, one of Bolivar's principal officers, and one of those who had signed the proclamation. The appearance of Bolivar in Venezuela, however, was the signal for a general rising; and not only the people joined him in thousands, but great numbers of the royalist soldiers, three-fourths of whom were Creoles, deserted to him, entire companies and regiments in some cases coming over. The result was, that when he marched upon Caracas the Spanish governor of the city found he was without the means of making any resistance to his entry; and, within little more than a year after the capitulation of Miranda at Victoria, another treaty was concluded at the same place, by which all Venezuela was again surrendered upon precisely the same terms to the patriots. Monteverde, indeed, refused to ratify the treaty; and he still retained the strong fortress of Porto Cabello, where he lay, with, it would appear, the command of the three provinces of Guayana, Maracaibo, and Coro. Bolivar, however, established himself in Caracas, which city he entered on the 4th of August, a few days after the capitulation, amid the tumultuous rejoicings of the inhabitants. He now, in conformity with the example set by Marinno, assumed the title of Dictator and Liberator of the Western Provinces of Venezuela. Of the five liberated provinces, Caracas, Varinas, and Margarita were considered as forming his government; those of Cumana and Barcelona as subject to Marinno.

Very soon, however, everything again began to go wrong. In the first place, the government set up by the two liberators, instead of being a free republic, was a military despotism, and that both in form and in fact. The people seem to have been nearly as much oppressed and pillaged by the troops of Bolivar and Marinno as they had been by those of Monteverde. Then the want of money came in a short time to be severely felt by the new governments. Nor was the war either concluded, or even suspended for more than a moment. Porto Cabello was blockaded both by sea and land, but could not be reduced; Monteverde's force was soon strengthened by the arrival of a body of 1500 troops from Cadiz, which the besieging squadron could not prevent from entering the place. Some successes, indeed, were obtained by the patriots in the field; but even that was only for a short time. Meanwhile the character of the war grew every day more horrid and demoniac. Boves and Morales, two of the

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Colombia, i. 354.

royalist commanders, with their Infernal Division, as it was named, particularly distinguished themselves by their atrocities. It is distinctly affirmed that Boves and another captain, Rosette, in one of their expeditions, in which they marched through a country four hundred miles in extent, from the banks of the Orinoco to the environs of Caracas, "did not spare one human being, but butchered all those who refused to join them." On one occasion we read of Puy, another of the Spanish military chiefs—for such they might properly be called, each of them being in the habit of acting for himself with scarcely any reference to a central or common authority—having ordered out five hundred and seventy-four prisoners to be put to death at once, when five hundred of them were actually shot, and the rest were saved by an alarm being raised that the republicans were approaching. On the other hand, it is admitted that, some time after this, Bolivar, "in a moment of frenzy," as it is phrased by his apologists, gave orders for the execution of all the Spanish prisoners at Laguaira and Caracas. General Ducoudray Holstein gives a particular account of this massacre, which was appointed to take place on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of February, 1814. "This bloody sentence," says the General, "was effectually executed upon 1253 Spaniards and Islenos, prisoners of war, merchants, and others, who had never taken arms against the Dictator, and who were established in Curaçoa and Laguaira. These executions lasted the three appointed days, without any trial or judgment. The Dictator would hear no representation, no entreaty; nothing could save them. Amongst these victims were men unable to walk, by reason of infirmity or age, many of them being eighty years old and upwards. They were put into an arm-chair, strongly tied, drawn to the place of execution, and shot!" In retaliation, Colonel Salomon, who had become governor of Porto Cabello in the place of Monteverde, disabled by his wounds, put to death all his prisoners in that fort. Whenever a town was taken, the common practice seems to have been to make a general slaughter of the inhabitants. The principal destruction of life in all cases, indeed, appears to have taken place after the fighting was over; in few or none of the battles is the number of killed stated to have been considerable.

In the midst of all this work of butchery and extermination, Bolivar had, on the 1st of January, 1814, formally resigned, or offered to resign, his dictatorship in an assembly of the principal inhabitants of Caracas, whom he called together in the convent of San Francisco; but the proposition was not accepted; it was voted, on the contrary, that he should retain the supreme power until Venezuela and New Grenada should be united under one government. Without taking into account the armed force by which his enemies or detractors say the assembly was overawed, it is pretty evident that the circumstances of the moment scarcely permitted any other conclusion of the business. Instead of losing or even perilling his dictatorship by this proceeding, Bolivar in reality obtained a confirmation of it, or rather his first regular institution into it, or what might pass for such.

However, all would not do; the new system was doomed once more to fall to the ground. After the Spanish forces under General Cagigal and Colonel Cevallos had been beaten on the 29th of May in the great battle of Carabozo, and a number of other actions, which it would be wearisome to particularize, had been fought with varying success, Bolivar and Marinno were attacked by

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Boves at La Puerta on the 14th of June, and completely routed. The Spaniards now carried everything before them ; and, after Boves had forced the patriots to raise the siege of Porto Cabello, and compelled Valencia to surrender by capitulation, another royalist commander, Colonel Gonzales, advanced upon the city of Caracas, which was abandoned by Bolivar upon his approach ; and the Spanish forces re-entered that capital in triumph on the 7th of July, or about a year after it had last fallen into the hands of the insurgents. There was some more fighting, in which Bolivar was again beaten by Boves ; and at last, on the 24th of August, he and Marinno embarked at Cumana for the island of Margarita, whence they proceeded to Carthagena, and arrived there, as already related, on the 25th of September. The war was maintained for some time longer by Ribas, Bermudes, and other partisans of the two dictators, after they had themselves left the country ; but before the end of the year the last remnant of the patriot army was destroyed, having been attacked and beaten, first by Boves at Urica, on the 5th of December (in which action, however, Boves lost his life), and again by Morales at Maturin, where it made its last stand, six days after.

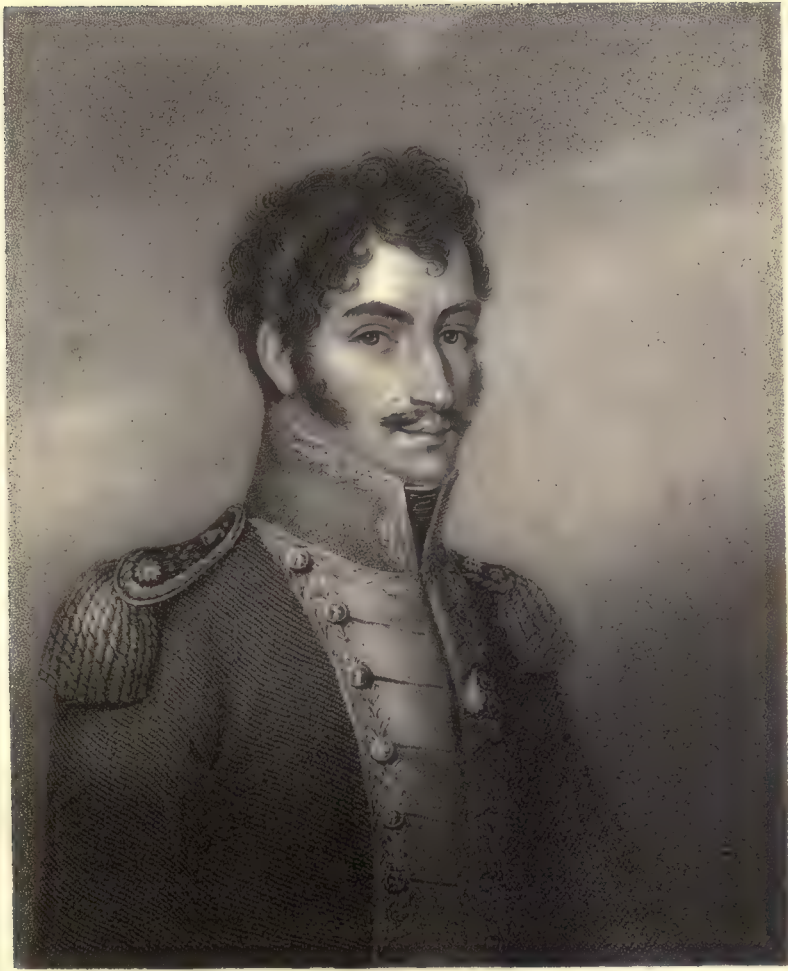
But the re-establishment of the Spanish authority did not restore good government and peace to Venezuela now, any more than it had done in 1812, or, indeed, we may say, than any change had done since the first breaking out of the revolution. On the recovery of Caracas, the civil government of the city was intrusted provisionally to the Marquis de Casa Leon, and the military government to Don Manuel Cagigal, who had for some time held the office of Captain-General of Venezuela. Both are admitted to have been humane and moderate men ; but neither appears to have had much firmness or force of character ; nor did the position of either allow him to make any stand against the ascendancy of the military chieftains, and that power of the sword which usually domineers over everything in times of civil confusion. Even the formal supreme authority of Cagigal was soon after reduced by General Morales being appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the portion of the country lying to the east of the city of Caracas, which were thus withdrawn altogether from the jurisdiction of the Captain-General. Morales is charged with being one of the most blood-thirsty of the Spanish commanders ; and his government of the districts committed to his charge, as a mere system of barbarian pillage and oppression.

The revolutionary spirit, however, lay quiet in Venezuela, or at least made no armed demonstration, throughout the year 1815. Only the island of Margarita maintained its independence, first against all the efforts of Morales, and afterwards, for a considerable time, against Morillo himself and his veterans fresh from Spain, although they eventually obtained possession of Villa del Assumpcion, the capital of the island. At last, in the beginning of 1816, after they had lost Carthagena, and been driven out of nearly the whole of New Grenada, the revolutionary chiefs made preparations for another attempt in Venezuela. Bolivar had by this time left Jamaica, to which he had sailed from Carthagena in May of the preceding year, and had come to Aux Cayes in the island of Hayti. There he was met by most of the leading persons, military and civil, who had taken part in the late wars in Venezuela and New Grenada, among the rest his former coadjutor Marinno ; Generals Piar and Bermudez ; Francisco Antonio Zea, afterwards President of Colombia ; Louis Brion, a person of French

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Ducoudray Holstein, i. 310.

extraction, a native of the island of Curaçoa, who had expended a large fortune in support of the independent cause, and had in the preceding November arrived at Carthagena from London, with a corvette of twenty-four guns which he had purchased and laden with 14,000 stand of arms, and a great quantity of warlike stores; the half French, half German Ducoudray Holstein, who had taken a conspicuous part in the late unsuccessful defence of Carthagena; and the Scotch adventurer Sir Gregor M'Gregor, another of the many foreigners from our own and other countries who had by this time come over to expend their enthusiasm or to seek their fortunes in these American wars. By these persons it was agreed that a new expedition should be fitted out, and that it should be put under the command of Bolivar, as Captain-General of the armies of Venezuela and New Grenada. The Haytian government, then presided over by Petion, made liberal advances in ammunition, provisions, and money; Brion, who was appointed commander of the naval part of the armament, contributed his corvette with all she carried, and whatever besides remained of his property or his credit; and the expedition set sail from Aux Cayes on the 10th of April. There were six generals, nine colonels, forty-seven lieutenant-colonels, and many other staff and other superior officers, besides majors, captains, and lieutenants to the number of about five hundred; but the number of soldiers was by no means in proportion to that of the officers. On the 2nd of May, when not far from the island of Margarita, the squadron fell in with two Spanish men-of-war, a large brig and a schooner, both of which were captured after a smart action. The brig was boarded by the patriots; when they entered the cabin with drawn swords, they found the Spanish commander, who had been wounded, in the hands of the surgeon, upon which they killed first the one and then the other. Brion, who fought bravely, was wounded, and was immediately after the action promoted to the rank of Admiral of the republic of Venezuela. They reached the port of Juan Griego, in the island of Margarita, the next day, and were there welcomed and congratulated by General Arismendi, who had held the greater part of the island till now against the Spaniards. A junta, or general assembly, of the patriots of the place was held the same day in the cathedral of La Villa del Norte, to which all the officers of the expedition were invited; and there Bolivar was, with much religious and civic ceremony, elected, or recognised and proclaimed, General-in-Chief and Captain-General of the Liberating Armies of Venezuela and New Grenada, to which titles he is stated to have in his official acts added of himself that of Supreme Chief of the Republic of Venezuela. Their late success in the sea-fight had gone before them; and as soon as their arrival was known the Spanish forces evacuated Villa del Assumpcion, the capital of the island, and retired within the fortifications of Pampatar. Yet the Liberating Army was at this time in no very enviable plight. "We were absolutely destitute of everything," writes General Ducoudray Holstein; "the small and rocky island of Margarita was unable to furnish us with the necessary provisions; the vessels were in want of rations for the crews, so that each officer and private had a scanty ration, consisting of a little cake of Indian meal, not weighing two ounces, called *arepa*, and two small salted fishes, with nothing else! We general and staff officers dined with General Arismendi; but our table was surrounded by at least fifty hungry officers not belonging to the staff, who took from our table what they could reach, so that



GENERAL T. R.

POLYAS.

General of the Army

and the Secretary of the War Department

many of the company rose without being able to satisfy their own hunger. There was no money, no clothes, nor anything but great confusion and misery!"

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At last, on the 25th of May the squadron again set sail. Stretching across to the main, they put in at the port of the town of Carupano, from which not only the Spanish garrison but also the greater part of the inhabitants fled at their approach. They stayed till the end of June, but in all that time not fifty volunteers came and joined their ranks. Bolivar then determined to try another point, and, again setting out with thirteen vessels, sailed for the town or village of Ocumare, between Caracas and Porto Cabello, which they reached on the 3rd of July. From this place he addressed a proclamation a few days after to the people of Venezuela, telling them that an army provided with arms and munitions of war of every kind was on its march under his orders to liberate them; and promising, among many other things, that the killing of prisoners should cease, and that, as soon as possession should be obtained of the capital, the popular constituencies would be invited to elect their deputies for a Congress. Bolivar's boasted Liberating Army, according to Holstein, consisted at this time "of six hundred and fifty men, of whom three hundred had never seen a battle, and whose officers were, a great part of them, totally unfit to command." The proclamation appears to have induced one hundred and fifty or two hundred slaves to join his ranks. But on the 10th of July, four days after, the Liberating Army thus augmented was attacked on its march to the city of Valencia by Morales, with a force hardly half as numerous, and scattered in a quarter of an hour. The patriots are said to have lost two hundred men in this affair. Bolivar made his escape to the coast, and, getting on board one of his vessels that lay in the bay, reached the Dutch island of Buen Ayre the same afternoon. He came across again to the continent the next day, but re-embarked immediately after landing, and, giving up the enterprise for the present, returned to Hayti. All the ships of the liberating squadron also took their departure from the Bay of Ocumare, and General M'Gregor was left to collect and bring off as he best could the remains of the scattered land forces. He retreated westward along the plains by the sea-shore, pursued and harassed all the way by a body of Spanish troops, whom he had more than once to turn round and fight; but he succeeded at last in effecting a junction of his worn-out men with another division of the liberating army under General Piar, and in possessing himself of the city of Barcelona, from which he was enabled to open a communication with other bands of patriots who had risen in the provinces of Cumana and Guayana.

In this state matters remained till the end of the year. Then, on the 25th of December, Bolivar once more set out from Hayti, in a vessel laden with arms, ammunition, and provisions, with which he had been again supplied by President Petion, and arrived at Barcelona on the 31st. He immediately convoked a Congress to meet at his head-quarters in that city; and proclaimed a provisional government under his own presidency, as Supreme Chief of the Republic of Venezuela. On the 2nd of January, 1817, the patriots here were joined by General Arismendi, with a body of three hundred men, the Spaniards having by this time evacuated Pampatar, and left the island of Margarita completely free; and soon after commenced a new struggle, which proved the last, for the liberation of this portion of Spanish America.

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It will be sufficient for the present to take a very cursory survey of the course of events, down to the date at which we are now arrived, in the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata, and in the captain-generalship of Chili.

RIO DE LA PLATA.

Reports on South America of Messrs. Rodney and Graham ; with Notes by the Editor. Lond. 1819. Note C.

The first intelligence brought to Buenos Ayres of the extraordinary events that had taken place in Spain in May, 1808, came by an envoy from Bonaparte, who arrived in a French brig towards the end of July. The Viceroy at this time was the same General Liniers to whom General Whitelock had surrendered in the preceding year. With the approval of the Audiencia and the Cabildo, or municipality, Liniers in a proclamation announced, very vaguely, what had happened in the mother-country, and in the name of the French emperor, who, he told them, had been struck with admiration by their late triumph over the English, exhorted the people to remain quiet. On this, Don Xavier Elio, the governor of Montevideo, assembled a junta of Spaniards in that city, and, with the support of a commissioner who soon after arrived from the Junta of Seville, stirred up the Spaniards in Buenos Ayres to make an attempt, on the 1st of January, 1809, to depose Liniers. It proved unsuccessful ; but a few months afterwards he was superseded by the Central Junta, and replaced by Don Baltazar Hidalgo Cisneros, who was as staunch a supporter of the Spanish interest as Elio. Meanwhile, in the beginning of this year 1809, the people of the town of La Paz had set up what they called a Junta Intuitiva, or government for themselves, upon independent principles ; but, like the similar movement at Quito in the following August, this attempt was speedily put down. Troops were sent against La Paz both from Buenos Ayres and Peru.

The following year, however, when Spain seemed to be completely overrun by the French armies, Cisneros found himself compelled to yield to the public demand for the establishment of a colonial junta, which was accordingly constituted at a meeting held on the 28th of May, 1810, the Viceroy being recognised as its head. But it was soon found necessary to get rid not only of Cisneros, but of all the other Europeans in the service of the government. The Viceroy and the members of the Audiencia were sent off to the Canary Islands, and most of the rest betook themselves to Montevideo.

The government of the Junta, however, the most efficient member of which was Dr. Mariano Moreno, one of the two secretaries, had to meet an armed opposition from various quarters. Liniers, who had been permitted by Cisneros to retire to Cordova, raised a considerable force in conjunction with the governor of that province ; but both he and the governor were soon taken and executed. The resistance attempted by the governor of Chuquisaca was equally ineffectual. The royalists made some stand in several provinces of Upper Peru ; but there too they were soon put down. By the end of the year 1810, the only parts of the viceroyalty in which the authority of the Junta was not acknowledged, or was openly set at defiance, were Montevideo and Paraguay.

General Belgrano had been sent against Paraguay, but had got beaten by the troops of that province ; and it appears to have been a few months after this, in the year 1811, that the inhabitants of Assumpcion, the capital, quietly deposed the Spanish governor, and set up a junta of their own. The secretary of the new government was Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez Francia, who two years after got himself appointed Consul, and in 1814 Dictator ; under which name he continued to govern the country with absolute authority, and to preserve it independent both of Buenos Ayres and of Spain, till his death in 1840.

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Memoirs of
General Miller,
i. 53, &c.

As for Montevideo, or the Banda Oriental, as the province is called of which that city is the capital, the contest for the possession of it was carried on with varying success for several years. The personage who made the principal figure in this war was the famous Fernando José de Artigas, who was a native of the Banda Oriental, and of respectable parentage, but had first become notorious as chief of one of the bands of smugglers by which that region, a sort of borderland between the possessions of Spain and Portugal, and sometimes in the possession of the one power, sometimes of the other, had always been infested. The Spanish government at Montevideo then purchased his services, and employed him in the suppression of the illicit trade of which he had previously been the most conspicuous and formidable protector. For some time after the revolution broke out, he continued to adhere to the Spanish party; but in the latter part of the year 1811 he quarrelled with the Governor of Montevideo and went over to the Buenosayrian patriots. In little more than another twelvemonth, however, he broke off from his new associates and declared himself independent. The Montevideo royalists had been defeated by General Rondeau at El Cerito on the 31st of December, 1812; and they were afterwards worsted again, in February, 1813, by Colonel José de San Martín, at San Lorenzo. On the 20th of June, 1814, the town of Montevideo was taken by Colonel Alvear. No sooner, however, had the patriots thus obtained possession of the place than they were attacked by their old friend Artigas, who soon compelled them to evacuate it. Artigas now both claimed the sovereignty of the Banda Oriental, and invaded the territory of Buenos Ayres. But at last, the Brazilian government, on the ground that the district was without any proper government, sent General Lecor into the Banda with a force of eight thousand men, which entered and took possession of Montevideo on the 19th of January, 1817.

Meanwhile, the government at Buenos Ayres had undergone a succession of changes. A contest for ascendancy between Moreno and the President of the Junta, Cornelio de Saavedra, had resulted in the discomfiture of the latter, and the establishment of a new executive, on the 23rd of September, 1811. The government thus constituted lasted till October, 1812, when it was forcibly overturned by a faction of the patriots which seems to have been of a more decidedly democratic character than the party that had hitherto ruled. The new provisional executive, styled *El Gobierno Superior*, immediately called a Sovereign Constituent assembly, as a representation of the people, which met at Buenos Ayres on the 30th of January, 1813. This Congress appointed a permanent executive; and it was now that the Spanish flag was abolished, and that coins were for the first time struck with the republican arms. The new constitution, however, after a time failed to give satisfaction, and it was resolved to try the government of one man. On the 31st of December, 1813, the Junta was abolished, and Señor Gervasio Posadas was appointed Supreme Director—a reform which, says a native historian of this revolution, “placed in the capital great obstacles to the vibration of the passions.” Posadas resigned in 1814; upon which General Alvear was elected his successor; but in the following year he was deposed and forced to leave the country by his rival General Rondeau. Colonel Alvarez was then appointed Interim Director; and he appears to have been succeeded by General Balcarce in the spring of 1816. In March, 1816, a new Congress was assembled in the city of Tucuman; and by this body, which

Historical Sketch
by Dr. Gregorio
Funes, in Reports
of Rodney and
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afterwards transferred its sittings to Buenos Ayres, a Declaration of the Independence of the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata was at last issued on the 9th of July in that year. On the same day General Juan Martin Pueyrredon was nominated Supreme Director; and he continued to preside over the republic at the date at which our narrative stops for the present.

All this time a great deal of fighting had been going on in another direction, as well as in that of Montevideo and the Banda Oriental. General Balcarce, who had been sent to Upper Peru, and had in the first instance put down all opposition from the Spanish party there, was signally defeated by the royalist general, Goyeneche, at Huaqui, on the 20th of June, 1811, and the patriots were soon after completely driven for the present out of Upper Peru. On the 24th of September, 1812, however, Belgrano defeated the royalist general, Don Pio Tristan, at Tucuman; and a second time at Salta, eighty-seven leagues to the north of that city, on the 20th of February, 1813. But Belgrano in turn was beaten by Tristan and General Pezuela at Vilcapugio on the 1st of October following, and again at Ayoma on the 14th of November. The command of the forces in this quarter was now given to San Martin; but in May, 1814, he was obliged to resign from illness; and on the 28th of November, 1815, General Rondeau, who had been appointed his successor, was totally defeated by Pezuela at Sipesipe, and Upper Peru was once more left for a time to the undisturbed possession of the Spaniards. Belgrano was afterwards re-appointed to the command, and put at the head of an army of four thousand well-equipped troops. but he effected nothing, and soon saw his army dispersed, and found himself a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

CHILI.

*Memoirs of
General Miller,
i. 109, &c.*

The history of the liberation of Chili is a part of that of the Rio de la Plata revolution. In accordance with what was done about the same time in the other colonies, the Spanish Captain-General, Carrasco, was displaced there on the 18th of July, 1810, and the Count de la Conquista set at the head of a domestic government. On the 18th of September following a junta, which, however, acknowledged the sovereignty of Ferdinand VII., was established at Santiago. On the 1st of April, 1811, an attempt was made by the Spanish party to overturn the new government, which was defeated; and upon this the members of the Audiencia, which had till now remained in the full exercise of its functions, were deprived of their authority. Members were now elected for a Congress, which assembled in June. But the meeting of this body proved only the beginning of all sorts of intrigue and confusion. Three brothers, Jose Miguel, Juan Jose, and Luis Carrera, who all held commands in the army, and were favourites both with the troops and the people, seized the government by force, and, after dissolving the Congress on the 2nd of December, got a new junta formed with the eldest of the three at its head. Taking advantage of the dissatisfaction and dissension that now arose, Abascal, the Viceroy of Peru, in the end of the following year dispatched a force from Lima, under the command of General Pareja, which landed at San Vicente in the beginning of 1813. The campaign commenced in the end of March, and at first the Chilenos, commanded by Jose Miguel Carrera, obtained some successes; Pareja was driven to take shelter in the town of Chillan, where he died, and the command of the

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royalist army fell to Colonel Sanchez. But nothing decisive was effected; and at last, on the 24th of November, Carrera, who was thought to have shown but little military capacity, was forced to resign the command of the army to Colonel Don Bernardo O'Higgins; and at the same time he and his brothers were also driven from the government. Not long after an additional body of troops arrived from Lima under General Gainza; but he was soon reduced by O'Higgins to such difficulties, that on the 5th of May, 1814, he was glad to agree to a treaty at Talca, by which he bound himself to re-embark for Peru with all his troops within the space of two months. This convention was negotiated under the mediation of Captain Hillyar, of His Britannic Majesty's ship *Phœbe*, who had recently arrived at Valparaiso, bringing overtures for an arrangement from the Viceroy of Peru; nevertheless, the Viceroy refused to ratify it. An official intimation of his refusal reached Santiago, when everything there was in confusion from an attempt made by the Carreras to regain their power, which had been already partially successful. Instead of turning their arms, as they had been about to do, against one another, O'Higgins and Carrera now set out to meet the common enemy: but all their efforts proved vain; and, after routing them in a fierce and destructive conflict at Rancagua on the 1st of October, in which, we are told, each party hoisted the black flag, and no quarter was given, the new royalist Commander-in-Chief, General Osorio, entered and took possession of Santiago without encountering any further resistance.

The Spanish authority continued undisturbed in Chili for more than two years, except by a few guerrilla bands under Rodriguez, Neyra, and other chiefs, which harassed some parts of the country. But the re-establishment of the royal government among their neighbours was an event that could not be viewed with indifference by the people of Buenos Ayres. Towards the close of the year 1814, General San Martin, who had by this time recovered his health, was appointed to the command of the province of Cuyo, which borders on Chili, although divided from it by the mighty Andes, hitherto supposed to present an insuperable barrier to the passage of a military force. He immediately set himself to prepare for the invasion of Chili; but the slender resources of the provincial government, we are told, and the thinness of the population, consisting only of fifty thousand souls sprinkled over an immense extent of pampa, prevented him from forming a sufficient force in a shorter space of time than two years. At last, however, the liberating army, being about 4000 strong, set out from Mendoza on the 17th of January, 1817. They had to make their way over five principal ridges, besides innumerable others of less elevation; great numbers of the men perished from the intense cold; of 9281 mules and 1600 horses, only 4300 mules and 500 horses lived through the march; but at last, in the beginning of February, the survivors had gained the western declivity of the last ridge. On the 12th of that month was fought the great battle of Chacabuco, in which the Buenos-Ayreans, under the command of San Martin and O'Higgins, completely routed the Spanish forces commanded by Generals Maroto and Soler; and on the 14th the patriots entered Santiago in triumph, and Chili was once more free.

*Memoirs of
General Miller,
i. 90, &c.*

The only disturbance that had as yet taken place in the viceroyalty of Peru was a general rising of the Indians in the provinces of Cuzco, Huamanga, and

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Arequipa ; but their unarmed and undisciplined multitudes were soon put down by General Ramirez. Abascal was superseded in the office of Viceroy by General Pezuela in July, 1816.

BRAZIL.

The vast Portuguese colony of Brazil also partook in the change which the French invasion of the Peninsula brought about in every other part of South America. King John VI. of Portugal, flying from his European dominions upon Bonaparte's declaration of war in 1807, arrived at Rio de Janeiro on the 22nd of January in the following year. The residence of the king and the royal family, making Brazil the seat of government, at once raised the country from the condition of a colony or dependency. Up to this time it had been as jealously governed as any of the Spanish colonial possessions ; most of the commercial and other restrictions by which it had been distinguished from the mother country were now removed ; the ports were opened to the trade of all nations, many new manufactures were established, printing-presses were set up and newspapers published, and the social system generally assumed to a large extent a European character. After the termination of the war with France, Brazil was formally raised to the rank of a kingdom, King John taking the title of King of Portugal, Algarve, and Brazil. An insurrection, of a liberatist if not anti-monarchical character, broke out in Pernambuco in the spring of 1817 ; but it did not extend beyond that province, and was soon suppressed.*

* The complete view which we have been enabled to present to our readers of the complicated events upon which the ultimate independence of the South American provinces was established, will greatly facilitate a right

understanding of the subsequent policy of the English Government ; and we therefore do not regret the length to which this important narrative has extended.—ED.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the 28th of January the Prince Regent opened the fifth session of the existing Parliament. The speech from the Throne contained the following passage: "In considering our internal situation you will, I doubt not, feel a just indignation at the attempts which have been made to take advantage of the distresses of the country, for the purpose of exciting a spirit of sedition and violence. I am too well convinced of the loyalty and good sense of the great body of his Majesty's subjects, to believe them capable of being perverted by the arts which are employed to seduce them; but I am determined to omit no precautions for preserving the public peace, and for counteracting the designs of the disaffected." It would have been difficult to infer from this language that the Government believed that a formidable and widely organized insurrection was threatening the country, and that the only remedy was a violation of the constitutional safeguards of the liberties of the people. Attempts to excite a spirit of sedition, amongst a people incapable "of being perverted by the arts employed to seduce them," were subjects for vigilance towards the few, without infringement of the rights of the many. The seconder of the Address in the Commons asserted that the demagogues and their acts would die of themselves. The debate in the Lower House was suddenly interrupted by a message from the Lords. An outrage had been offered to the Prince Regent on his return from opening the Parliament. The windows of the state-carriage had been broken by some missile. The two Houses, after agreeing upon an Address to the Prince Regent on this event, adjourned. Upon the resumption of the debate the next day in the Commons, and upon its commencement in the Lords, the insult to the representative of the Sovereign, which was at first asserted to be an attempt upon his life, gave a decided tone to the proceedings of both Houses. In both assemblies the opposition loudly proclaimed the necessity of a rigid and unsparing economy; and the proposed amendment upon the Address went directly to pledge the most severe reduction of every possible expense. The practical answer to these abortive proposals was the intimation of Lord Sidmouth, that in three days he should present a message from the Prince Regent on the subject of the alleged disaffection of large bodies of the people. *Alarm*, that became the great instrument of governing till the close of the reign of George III., had its full capabilities revealed in what Lord Dudley described as "the pop-gun plot." Addressing the Bishop of Llandaff on the 1st of February, 1817, this able and temperate observer says, "Pray tell me what you think of the state of public opinion and feeling at this moment. Is there a dangerous spirit abroad, or is there not? Canning says there is. But an eloquent minister is a bad authority upon such a subject. An *alarm* is the harvest of such a personage." With a real admiration of many points in the character of this "personage," we cannot but regard the period in

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

Hansard, vol. XXXV. p. 13.

OUTRAGE ON THE PRINCE REGENT.

ALARM.

Letters, p. 159.

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Hansard, vol.
xxv. p. 130.

See ante, page 56.

Report of Secret
Committee.

Machiavelli,
Discourses on
Livy, chap. ii.

which he was a mere gleaner in the harvest of alarm as the least creditable portion of his life. He had been excluded from power for three years. He returned to jealous colleagues and to bitter rivals. He could not exist out of the circle of party. Rather than not win the equivocal honours of a partizan, he was content to be a tool. When Canning, on the second night of the debate on the Address, denied that the existing state of the representation was a grievance; when he said, "I deny the assumption that the House of Commons, as it stands, is not, to all practical purposes, an adequate representation of the people; I deny that it requires any amendment or alteration;" he spoke, we have no doubt, his honest convictions. But when he attempted, as he did in the same speech, to confound the most moderate projects of reform with the doctrines of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and mixed up the whole body of propounders of these doctrines with the mad fanatics called Spenceans, we lament to see a great mind prostituting its talents to such dishonest advocacy. He was thrust forward to play a part, and he so played it that he brought down his fine genius to the level of those under whom he served. But the policy was successful. It was the preparation for the message of the 3rd of February, that the Prince Regent had given orders that there be laid before the Houses, "Papers containing information respecting certain practices, meetings, and combinations in the metropolis, and in different parts of the kingdom, evidently calculated to endanger the public tranquillity, to alienate the affections of his Majesty's subjects from his Majesty's person and government, and to bring into hatred and contempt the whole system of our laws and institutions." In moving the order of the day for the consideration of this message, Lord Sidmouth, in the House of Lords, affirmed that the communication was in no degree founded on or connected with, the outrage upon the Prince Regent on the first day of the session. And yet the House of Lords saw the attack upon the Prince Regent as "an additional and melancholy proof of the efficacy of this system [the system complained of in the Message] to destroy all reverence for authority." It is difficult to imagine that so serious a charge against a large portion of the people, as that made in the Message of the 3rd of February, should have been so lightly passed over in the Royal Speech of the 28th of January, had not some new circumstances arisen to warrant the course which the Government was now taking. Was it that the fears of the illustrious personage who had heard the upbraiding groans of the multitude, and had sustained a rude insult from some reckless hand, had urged his ministers upon the career which they were now entering upon, of exaggerating discontents, of tempting distress into sedition, of sowing suspicion of the poor in the minds of the rich, of confounding the reformer and the anarchist in one general hatred? One of the keenest of political reasoners speaks of sovereigns, who, "neglecting all virtuous actions, began to believe that princes were exalted for no other end but to discriminate themselves from their subjects by their pomp, luxury, and all other effeminate qualities, by which means they fell into the hatred of the people, and by consequence became afraid of them, and that fear increasing, they began to meditate revenge." Up to a certain point, we are constrained to believe that this temper was something akin to that of the Regent in those

unhappy days. It is well that the genius of our Constitution rendered this temper comparatively powerless.

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REPORTS OF SE-
CRET COMMITTEES

See p. 55.

The message of the Prince Regent of the 3rd of February was referred to a Secret Committee in each House, and these Committees made their Reports on the 18th and 19th of the same month. We have already noticed that portion of the Report of the Lords which describes "the traitorous conspiracy," which was developed in the riot at Spa-fields. One-third of the Report is devoted to a narrative of this riot, and the designs of its miserable abettors, in terms of the most fearful solemnity. Not Cicero's denunciations of Catiline are more horror-stirring. The Report then proceeds to detail the general state of the country. "It appears clearly that the object is, by means of societies or clubs, established, or to be established, in all parts of Great Britain, *under pretence of Parliamentary Reform*, to infect the minds of all classes of the community, and particularly of those whose situation most exposes them to such impressions, with a spirit of discontent and disaffection, of insubordination, and contempt of all law, religion, and morality, and to hold out to them the plunder of all property as the main object of their efforts, and the restoration of their natural rights; and no endeavours are omitted to prepare them to take up arms on the first signal for accomplishing their designs." . . . "The country societies are principally to be found in, and in the neighbourhood of, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Blackburn, Manchester, Birmingham, and Norwich, and in Glasgow and its vicinity; but they extend and are spreading, in some parts of the country, to almost every village." The Report finally calls for "further provisions for the preservation of the public peace, and for the protection of interests in which the happiness of every class of the community is deeply and equally involved." The Report of the House of Commons begins with the Spencean Societies, and goes on to describe, at greater length than that of the Lords, the Spa-fields conspiracy. The Hampden clubs are most emphatically denounced as aiming at "nothing short of a Revolution." The Report of the Commons thus concludes: "Your Committee cannot contemplate the activity and arts of the leaders in this conspiracy, and the numbers whom they have already seduced and may seduce; the oaths by which many of them are bound together; the means suggested and prepared for the forcible attainment of their objects; the nature of the objects themselves, which are not only the overthrow of all the political institutions of the kingdom, but also such a subversion of the rights and principles of property as must necessarily lead to general confusion, plunder, and bloodshed; without submitting to the most serious attention of the House, the dangers which exist, and which the utmost vigilance of Government, under the existing laws, has been found inadequate to prevent." Looking at these Reports in connexion with the facts which were subsequently brought to light, under the most solemn judicial investigations conducted in the spirit of the Constitution, and under the extra-judicial powers which were granted for the detection and punishment of guilt, we must either come to the conclusion that the Committees were the dupes of blind or wicked informers, or were unable to arrive at a sound judgment upon the facts presented to them, or were not unwilling to spread a panic which would

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leave Parliament for an indefinite time to its ordinary struggles for the interests of particular classes, to the comparative neglect of the welfare of the great body of the people. But, under the influence of these Reports, it would have been impossible to have made such a resistance to the Government as would have prevented the enactment of stringent measures, one of which was decidedly unconstitutional. Bills were brought in and passed by large majorities, to guard against and avert the dangers which had been so alarmingly proclaimed. The first of these renewed the act for the prevention and punishment of attempts to seduce soldiers and sailors from their allegiance; the second extended to the Prince Regent all the safeguards against treasonable attempts which secure the actual Sovereign; the third was for the prevention of seditious meetings. The last of the four was the most dangerous and the least called for. It gave to the Executive power the fearful right of imprisonment without trial. In common parlance, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, under "An Act to empower his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as his Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his person and government." The suspension was, however, in this instance, limited to the ensuing 1st of July.

MARCH OF THE
BLANKETEERS.

The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act was passed on the 3rd of March; the Bill for restraining Seditious Meetings did not become law till the 29th of March. Within a week after the passing of the act for imprisonment without trial, and before the magistrates had received any accession to their power as to the dispersion of tumultuous assemblies, an occurrence took place at Manchester, which was at once evidence of the agitated condition of distressed multitudes in the manufacturing districts, and of the extreme weakness of their purposes. This was the famous march of the Blanketeers. And yet, when the renewed Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed in June, the Report of the Secret Committee entered into minute detail of this senseless project, as one of the arguments for tampering again with the liberties of the whole kingdom. A plain and honest account of this affair is given by Samuel Bamford. According to his narrative, William Benbow, the shoemaker, had taken a great share in getting up and arranging a vast meeting, subsequently called the Blanket Meeting, for the purpose of marching to London to petition the Prince Regent in person. Bamford himself wholly condemned the measure. He deprecated the blind zeal of those who had proposed it; he believed they were instigated by those who would betray them. Up to this time the maxim of the Reformers had been, "Hold fast by the laws." New doctrines now began to be broached, which, if not in direct violation of the law, were ill disguised subterfuges for its evasion. The Blanket Meeting, however, took place in St. Peter's Field, at Manchester. It consisted, according to Bamford, of four or five thousand operatives;—according to the Second Report of the Lords' Secret Committee, of ten or twelve thousand. "Many of the individuals," says Bamford, "were observed to have blankets, rugs, or large coats, rolled up and tied knapsack-like, on their backs; some carried bundles under their arms; some had papers, supposed to be petitions, rolled up; and some had stout walking-sticks." The magistrates came upon the field and read the Riot Act; the meeting was dispersed by the military and constables; three hundred commenced a strag-

Bamford's *Life of a Radical*, vol. i. p. 32.

gling march, followed by a body of yeomanry, and a hundred and eighty reached Macclesfield at nine o'clock at night. Some were apprehended, some lay in the fields. The next morning the numbers had almost melted away; "about a score arrived at Leek, and six only were known to pass Ashbourne Bridge." More terrible events, however, were in preparation. According to the Second Report of the Lords' Secret Committee, "It was on the night of the 30th of March that a general insurrection was intended to have commenced at Manchester. The magistrates were to be seized; the prisoners were to be liberated; the soldiers were either to be surprised in their barracks, or a certain number of factories were to be set on fire, for the purpose of drawing the soldiers out of their barracks, of which a party stationed near them for that object were then to take possession, with a view of seizing the magazine." "This atrocious conspiracy was detected by the vigilance of the magistrates, and defeated by the apprehension and confinement of some of the ring-leaders a few days before the period fixed for its execution." Bamford records, that on the day after the Blanket Meeting, "a man dressed much like a dyer" came to him at Middleton, "to propose that in consequence of the treatment which the Blanketeers had received at the meeting and afterwards, 'a Moscow of Manchester' should take place that very night." Bamford and his friends dismissed him with the assurance that he was the dupe of some designing villain. The scheme which this dupe or scoundrel propounded was exactly that described in the Lords' Report. But there were men who did not receive this proposal with disgust and suspicion, as those of Middleton did. The avowed Reform-leaders—delegates and Hampden-Club men—were under perpetual terror. Some wandered from their homes in dread of imprisonment; others were seized in the bosom of their families. Public meetings were at an end. The fears and passions of large bodies of men had no safety valve. "Open meetings thus being suspended, secret ones ensued; they were originated at Manchester, and assembled under various pretexts. . . . Their real purpose, divulged only to the initiated, was to carry into effect the night attack on Manchester, the attempt at which had before failed for want of arrangement and co-operation." A little while after this 'Moscow' proposal, a co-delegate came to Bamford, to propose the assassination of all the ministers. We know that this scheme smouldered for several years. "The fact was," says Bamford, "this unfortunate person, in the confidence of an unsuspecting mind, as I believe, had, during one of his visits to London, formed a connexion with Oliver, the spy,—which connexion, during several succeeding months, gave a new impulse to secret meetings and plots in various parts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire; and ended in the tragedy of Brandreth, Ludlow, and Turner, at Derby." The course of this tragedy we have now to recount. It is the only one of the insurrectionary movements of the manufacturing districts in 1817 that has left any traces of judicial investigation, with the exception of proceedings at York, at which all the state-prisoners were discharged by the Grand Jury, or acquitted upon trial. All the persons connected with the Blanket expedition, and the expected risings at Manchester, were discharged before trial.

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Bamford, vol. i.
p. 77.

The Midland Counties of Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, had been in a disturbed state for several years. The habit of daring outrage was familiar to

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See ante, page 42.

Hansard, vol.
xxxvi. p. 1114.

large numbers of the manufacturing population. We have already exhibited that course of ignorant and brutal violence, known as Luddism. On the 23rd of June, 1817, Mr. Ponsonby described this system, as one that had not originated in political principles; but he expressed his belief that those who had been trained to mischief by its laws had mixed themselves with those who had political objects in view, and that from them had proceeded some of the most atrocious suggestions for the disturbance of the public peace. At the Leicester Assizes on the 1st of April, eight men were tried and convicted of the most daring outrages at Loughborough, and six of these offenders were executed on the 17th of the same month. There was not the slightest attempt at this trial to connect the crimes of these men with any political opinions. But amongst a population that for four years had witnessed the night attacks of armed men upon machinery, and with whom some of the leaders of such organized attacks were in habitual intercourse, it is manifest that the materials for political insurrection were abundantly accumulated. It was not the part of a wise and humane government to permit the feeblest spark of excitement from without to approach these inflammable materials. We do not think that the facts which time has revealed warrant us in going so far as Sir Samuel Romilly, who in his place in Parliament declared, on the 27th of January, 1818, that in his conscience he believed the whole of the Derbyshire insurrection was the work of the persons sent by government; but we do think that these facts justify a strong conviction that without the agency of these persons the insurrection would not have taken place. On the motion for the first reading of the Bill for continuing the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus, on the 23rd of June, Mr. Ponsonby, who had been a member of the Secret Committee, but had dissented from the majority as to the necessity of the farther suspension, stated to the House "some of the information gained from the papers and evidence presented to the Committee." In March, a person calling himself a delegate came to London from one of the Midland districts, and was introduced to one of similar opinions. He, of similar opinions, gave discouraging information as to the state of public feeling in the capital. The representations of the delegate as to the impatience of the country districts "to throw off the yoke," as he termed it, were not responded to. But he met two other persons ready to return with him as delegates from London; and Mr. Oliver proposed to go along with them, making a fourth delegate. Before they proceeded on their journey, Oliver was in communication with the Home Office; but received no instructions to compromise the safety of any one by tempting them into practices which he afterwards exposed. The co-delegates relied fully on Oliver;—the country delegate introduced him to all his friends as a second self. Oliver remained among these people from the 17th of April to the 27th of May, every where received as the London delegate. He was examined before the Secret Committee, and told them he was very shy of giving information; what he said was, that "London was ready to rise, and only wished to know what assistance could be derived from the country; and that the people of London would not stir first, but would be ready to second any movement from the country. His friend, the country delegate, gave effect to this information, by telling his brethren, the country delegates, that 75,000 individuals could be relied on in the eastern parts of the capital, and 75,000 in the western." Mr. Ponsonby thus showed,

Hansard, vol.
xxxvi. p. 1116.

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with a moderation and candour most advantageously contrasted with the frenzied declamations against individual members of the government made by such popularity hunters as Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Grey Bennett, that the representations of Oliver himself, and the representations which he permitted to be made with his knowledge and approval, did excite the wretched individuals, with whom the spy-delegate and the dupe-delegate conversed, to acts of rebellion or insubordination. But Mr. Ponsonby only traced Oliver to the 27th of May. We are now enabled to follow his course up to the moment of the Derbyshire insurrection. On the 6th of June an outbreak in Yorkshire was expected, and ten delegates were arrested at Thornhill-lees, near Dewsbury. On the day of the meeting, Oliver called on Mr. Willans, a bookseller of Dewsbury, and urged him to attend the meeting of delegates at Thornhill-lees. He had two months before addressed Willans in the most traitorous language. Willans having some suspicion of the incendiary, refused to go. Oliver himself attended the meeting, and was arrested with the others; but in the evening he was at large in Wakefield, and, entering the coach to go to Leeds, was accosted by a livery servant of Sir John Byng, who commanded the forces in the disturbed districts. This servant, after Oliver was gone, said that a few days before he had driven him in a gig from his master's house to meet a coach. These circumstances were discovered by the activity of Mr. Baines, of Leeds, who published them in his influential newspaper; and they formed the subject of a violent debate in the House of Commons, on the 16th of June. In a work of considerable historical importance, which has just appeared (February, 1847), and to which we shall have occasion frequently to refer, this particular transaction is minutely gone into, for the purpose of justifying Lord Sidmouth, as Secretary of State for the Home Department, against the imputations which arose out of the employment of such persons as Oliver. "None of them," says the author of the *Life*, "were employed in the first instance by Lord Sidmouth; but themselves sought him out: and if, which is not probable, they in any instances instigated the conspirators to crime in order to betray them, the treacherous act must have been entirely their own; as nothing would have excited more his lordship's indignation than the bare idea of so base a proceeding." The Dean of Norwich has obtained the most satisfactory testimony of Lord Strafford (formerly Sir John Byng), to this opinion of Lord Sidmouth's own conduct, in a letter as recent as August, 1846; "Oliver," Lord Strafford writes, "was sent to me with a letter from Lord Sidmouth, to the purport that he, Oliver, was going down into that part of the country where meetings were being frequently held, and that he had been desired to communicate to me any information he might obtain as to the time and place of such meetings, in order that I might take timely measures to prevent their taking place; the wish and intention being to prevent, not to encourage them, as was alleged against the government." Sir John Byng himself was perfectly incapable, as was acknowledged on all hands, of turning the spy into a tempter. We have no doubt that Oliver was a double deceiver. On the 16th of June, Mr. Allsop, who had been active at Nottingham in the preservation of the peace, as the Dean of Norwich reports, wrote to Lord Sidmouth as follows: "I feel myself called upon, in justice to Oliver, to make this communication to your lordship respecting him. The first time

Life and Correspondence of Lord Sidmouth, by the Hon. George Pel-lew, D.D., Dean of Norwich.

Vol. iii. p. 187.

Life, vol. iii. p. 194.

Life, vol. iii. p. 189.

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I ever saw him was on the 7th of June, on his arrival at Nottingham from Leeds. Although he then knew that a meeting was to take place in the evening, he fixed to leave for Birmingham in the afternoon, and only consented to stay for the meeting at the solicitation of Mr. Hooley and myself, in order to furnish us with the necessary information. Oliver expressly stated to us that his instructions from Sir John Byng were, not to conceal anything as to the Yorkshire meeting by which these people could be deceived; and he also stated his instructions from your lordship, not to hold out any encouragement. It was then most explicitly decided, that at the meeting in the evening he should not, in any way whatever, hold out the least encouragement or inducement to the persons who might be there, to take any other steps than such as they might think proper to adopt themselves; and I am persuaded, my lord, that such was this man's conduct accordingly, for his life was in the greatest danger, their suspicion of him being excited by his refusal to remain at Nottingham and countenance their proceedings, and he only consented to stay, at last, to lessen their suspicions." Of this meeting at Nottingham on the 7th of June, the trials of the Derby traitors convey no record. All evidence was suppressed of any circumstances prior to the 8th of June. We have now to follow the course of these remarkable trials; with the certainty that the spy of government was at the meeting of the 7th of June at which this outbreak was organized, and with a tolerably clear conviction, as will become more evident, that the unhappy agents in this insurrection were acted upon by the most extraordinary delusions from without. The defence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus was, that the leaders of a conspiracy might be seized so as to prevent an outbreak. The peace preservers of Nottingham on the 7th of June induced the government spy to attend a meeting of supposed conspirators, for the purpose of giving them the necessary information. If they had acted upon that information by arresting the conspirators, the Derby insurrection would have been crushed in the egg. The expression of Mr. Allsop, "it was explicitly decided" that no encouragement should be given by the spy, assumes a discussion previous to the decision. Where there are clear and honest intentions alone, it is not necessary explicitly to decide against the adoption of a treacherous and disgraceful line of conduct.

State Trials, vol.
xxxii., pages 755
to 1394.

On Sunday, the 8th of June, there was a remarkable assemblage at Pentridge, a village situated some two miles from the Ambergate station, on the present North Midland Railway. The village is in the hilly and thinly peopled district to the west of the river Derwent. In the neighbourhood of Pentridge there are several other scattered villages—all not far removed from a direct road to Nottingham. About a mile from Pentridge, at Butterley, was a large iron foundry. Two men in the employ of the proprietors of this foundry went into the White Horse public-house, at Pentridge, in the morning of the 8th of June, and found a good many persons in the parlour there, "talking about this revolution." There was one amongst them they called "The Captain." He had a map in his hand, and the people came in and kept asking him questions; and he said, there would be no good to be done except a complete overthrow of the Government. All the country was to rise, all at one time. Many talked thus. They made no secret. They spoke

State Trials, vol.
xxxii., Evidence
for the Crown,
p. 795 to 863.

it openly. They did not mind who heard them. They said they had plenty of pikes; and they would go and take Nottingham wholly to themselves; and when they got to Nottingham, every man would have a hundred guineas and plenty of rum, and it would be nothing but a journey of pleasure. This extraordinary assembly lasted six or seven hours. The two men from the iron works were special constables; but they were afraid to say anything about it. Having agreed to meet on the night of the 9th after dark, the people separated. The Captain, with the map in his hand, was Jeremiah Brandreth, a frame-work knitter, whose family had received parochial relief. Mr. Denman (who was counsel for the prisoners), after Brandreth had been convicted, compared this man with 'The Corsair' of Lord Byron, as one who

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"Dazzles, leads, yet chills, the vulgar heart;"

and obtains his superiority by

"The power, the nerve, the magic, of the mind."

In spite of Mr. Denman's rhetorical description of the mastery of this man over his weak followers, through "the influence of great courage, of uncommon decision, of unrelenting firmness; the influence of an eye like no eye that I ever beheld before, of a countenance and figure formed for activity, enterprise, and command," we must be content to believe, from the evidence of Brandreth's acts, that he was a frantic enthusiast, goaded to violence by great poverty, by imaginary oppression, and, what is more, by the grossest delusions as to his own power and the strength of his cause. We do not think that he was the less dangerous from his real character and the real circumstances around him; but, we believe, as Mr. Denman came to the conclusion, that in spite of his influence and command, "he was most clearly himself an instrument wielded by other hands." On Saturday night, the 7th of June, Oliver goes to a meeting at Nottingham, with instructions from Sir John Byng, "not to conceal anything as to the Yorkshire meeting by which these people could be deceived." On Sunday morning the Nottingham Captain is heard saying, "All the country is to rise, all at one time." On Monday night he passes the door of a labouring man at South Wingfield, about three miles from Pentridge, in his way to an old barn up in the field; and he urges the man to come with him, saying that "the countries, England, Ireland, and France, were to rise that night at ten o'clock," and that, "the northern clouds, men from the north, would come down and sweep all before them." This is somewhat different from the information that Oliver was authorized to give to the Nottingham meeting, that the Yorkshire delegates,—the northern clouds,—were scattered on the previous Friday. It is difficult not to regard the language of Brandreth as pure insanity, especially when we contrast it with the sober sense of some around him. "There was an old woman standing by," says the South Wingfield man, "and she tapped him on the shoulder, and said, 'My lad, we have got a magistrate here;'"—and the labourer himself "thought he must be drunk or mad, to think of such things." But on the madman went. In the old barn at South Wingfield he assembled twenty men, who had pikes and guns, and they went forward,

1817. stopping at solitary houses, and demanding guns, and dragging unwilling men out of their beds and hiding-places, and compelling them to march with them. At the farm-house of a widow, who behaved with unflinching courage, Brandreth fired in at a window, and killed one of her servants, upon arms being refused to him. His followers said he should not have shot that poor innocent man; and he replied, it was his duty to do it. Onwards they marched—the volunteers and the conscripts; and the Captain, when they halted at some lone dwellings, and met with any one who refused to march, had his ready exhortation, that “a great cloud out of the north would sweep all before them,” with the more particular information that “it would not be necessary to go farther than Nottingham, for London would be taken by the time they got there.” Who can doubt that the unhappy man was dreaming of the “75,000 men in the eastern parts of the capital, and 75,000 in the western?” Some of the pressed men ran away in the darkness;—one refused to march in rank, and upon Brandreth swearing he would shoot him in a moment, the bold fellow stepped up to him with his knife; and the Captain turned off from him. During all this march the rain was incessant. By the time they reached the Butterley Iron Works their numbers amounted to about a hundred.* Brandreth was boldly met by Mr. Goodwin, the manager of the works, and, when he demanded men, was told, “You shall not have one of them, you are too many already, unless you were going for a better purpose; disperse! depend upon it the laws will be too strong for you; you are going with halters about your necks.” Three men took shelter in the office of the works;—one man, Isaac Ludlam, who was afterwards convicted and executed, was exhorted by Mr. Goodwin not to go on, but he answered, much agitated, “I am as bad as I can be; I cannot go back.” After a short pause Brandreth gave the command, “March.” Soon after, this main body was followed by about fifty other men. On the morning of the 10th of June, Mr. Rolleston, a magistrate, went from Nottingham, on the road towards Eastwood, about six miles from Nottingham, and meeting there a considerable body of men armed with pikes, he returned to Nottingham, and procured some troops from the barracks, eighteen privates, commanded by a captain and a subaltern. Upon hearing that the soldiers were coming, the insurgents fled. The captain in command of the hussars, deposed that the military were kept on the alert during the night. He was ordered out with a party, on the road towards Derbyshire, about six in the morning, and approached about sixty men near Eastwood, who fled across the fields. A man in the road tried to form them, but they paid no attention to him. A number of prisoners were taken, and about forty guns and other arms were collected together.

Thus ended “the Derbyshire insurrection.” For these offences, three men were executed; eleven were transported for life; four were transported for fourteen years; and five were imprisoned for various terms.

There is one piece of evidence connected with these transactions which the Dean of Norwich has overlooked—the evidence of Samuel Bamford, a

* This is the distinct evidence of the manager of the works. The Dean of Norwich says, that when they arrived at the Butterley Iron Works their numbers amounted to 500. Biography, as well as History, should have regard to accuracy.

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poor weaver, but a man of considerable talent and unquestionable honesty,—a man who has now a keen sense of his early mistakes, and a conviction that “no redemption for the masses can exist, save one that should arise from their own virtue and knowledge.” Bamford was arrested on a suspicion of High Treason, and was delivered to the custody of the King’s messengers on the 30th of March, who conveyed him from Manchester to London. He was five times examined before the Privy Council; and he describes these examinations as being conducted by Lord Sidmouth with the greatest patience and kindness. He was finally discharged on the 30th of April. Soon after Bamford’s return to Middleton, he found that private meetings had been held in his absence, and suspicious intrigues carried on; that Joseph Mitchell, an old acquaintance, and a stranger, were the chief movers in these proceedings. One day, there came to him an old man, who had been his co-delegate to London from Derby, and a tall decent-looking young man, much like a town’s weaver. The old man said, a delegate meeting was to be held in Yorkshire, which would cause a finishing blow to be levelled at the borough-mongers: and that a man from Middleton, whose name he gave, and who had attended several previous meetings, was particularly wanted on the present occasion, concluding by asking Bamford to direct him to that man. Bamford suspected mischief, and pretended not to know such a man. He was suspicious of the designs of the stranger, who had been about Middleton, and had even inquired for him after his discharge. Bamford advised the old man to pause; but he “huffed at the advice.” The old man was Thomas Bacon, one of those who were arraigned at Derby, and transported for life; the young man was William Turner, who was executed with Brandreth and Ludlam. Bamford thus concludes this narrative: “The *stranger* whom Joseph Mitchell had so assiduously introduced amongst the discontented classes of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, first inveigled them into treasonable associations, then to armed insurrections,—and then betrayed them. That stranger, that betrayer, reader, was Oliver, the Spy.”

The acquittal of Watson, for High Treason, took place on the 16th of June. It appears to have had no influence on the measures of Government. The second suspension of the Habeas Corpus was passed by large majorities in both Houses; and the Prince Regent, in his Speech closing this Session on the 12th of July, averred that “a favourable change was happily taking place in the internal situation of the country, which was to be mainly ascribed to the salutary measures which Parliament had adopted for procuring the public tranquillity.” The private records of Lord Sidmouth’s life show that he had no great confidence in the “favourable change.” At the end of July Lord Sidmouth established his family at Malvern, intending to remain there a short time himself, “*and then back*,” as he said, “*to sedition and treason again*,” his Under Secretary being left in charge during the interim. Before his lordship’s departure, however, as he informed his brother on the 20th, he “revised all the cases of persons committed and detained under the Suspension Act; and the result, he trusted, would be the release of some upon their own recognizance, and increased indulgence to those who could not be released.” How stands the balance, then, of “sedition and treason,” on the part of the people, and “the

Life of a Radical,
vol. i. p. 158.

Lord Sidmouth’s
Life, vol. iii.
p. 196.

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Annual Register,
July 1817—p. 64.

Ibid. p. 72.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, vol. iii.
p. 178.

Ibid. vol. iii.
p. 199.

Ibid. p. 200.

salutary measures for preserving the public tranquillity," on the part of the Government? Watson was acquitted of High Treason, alleged against him for his absurd and guilty participation in the Spa-fields Riots, which formed so important a matter of the first Reports of the Secret Committee. Three others of the Spa-fields conspirators, indicted with him, were discharged; the younger Watson had eluded all pursuit. The persons imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle and Glasgow Gaol, on the charge of treason, seventeen in number, were set at liberty in July, receiving seven shillings each to carry them home. The Yorkshire insurrection thus terminated. "The trials of the State prisoners, as they have been called, closed at York, this day, August 22; and of the twenty-four persons against whom the Government solicitor was instructed to institute prosecutions, ten have been pronounced not guilty; against eleven others no bills were found; and one has been liberated on bail; leaving only two of the whole number in confinement, and these two have been detained without trial, by a Secretary of State's warrant, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act." The Manchester Blanketeers were all discharged, in spite of the opinion of the Duke of Northumberland, expressed to Lord Sidmouth by letter on the 21st of March, that the French Revolution was to be acted over again in England: "I am sure, my lord, the intended march of the Delegates from Manchester to London, must too forcibly have reminded your Lordship of the march of the Marseillois to Paris, at the commencement of the French Revolution, not to have convinced your lordship that the copy must have been at least recommended by some person deeply concerned in the original." These were the excitements of the fears of the great and the rich, that kept the Secretary of State in a fever about plots, and "sedition and treason." He was a courageous man, and what is called a consistent man. He was complimented on every side about his "public exertions." Whatever of peaceful and happy prospects remained in the country were to be attributed to his "firmness and prompt exertions in keeping down the Democrats." Sedition and treason had become associated in his own mind with his own importance. He was anxious to discharge his duty; and he saw only one path before him—the detection and punishment of democratic movements. He lived in an atmosphere of plots. On the 7th of October there were "extraordinary circumstances" which would prevent him making another excursion that year. This was a plot to attack the Tower on the 11th of October. The plan, as we learn by a private letter of Lord Sidmouth on the 13th, was in imitation of that of Despard, and a number of persons met accordingly on Tower Hill, but retired and dispersed. No other record exists of this plot that we can discover. With the Derby insurrections, therefore, must the historian be content, if he desire to bring forward a permanent example of the triumphs of Government over the rebellious designs that frightened the isle from its propriety. And yet it would appear that the course of these trials was not entirely satisfactory to all in authority, as they certainly were not to the nation in general. Lord Colchester writes to Lord Sidmouth on the 26th of October, "I cannot refrain from expressing my great satisfaction at the issue of the Derby trials, as most important to the country, in dispelling the mischievous delusion that high treason was an offence for which low persons

were not punishable." We have great doubts whether such a mischievous delusion ever existed. We know that when the Cato-Street Conspirators were brought to their just punishment, there was one universal feeling of satisfaction throughout the land, without regard to their being low persons. But we also know that the executions at Derby,—with the exception of that of Brandreth, who had dyed his hands in blood,—left a permanent conviction upon the minds, not only of low persons, but of a large number of the best informed, and the most influential in the Midland districts, that these unhappy men were state victims. There was a profound belief that the ignorant violence of these deluded creatures was criminal, but that it was not high treason. Lord Colchester intimates that some in high places held the same belief. "Also, I do most exceedingly rejoice, for the sake of my friend, the Secretary of State, that his judgment has been finally vindicated against all those hesitating and timid counsels which would have inclined to discountenance these proceedings, burying the reputation of the Government in irredeemable disgrace." A discriminating lenity in this solitary case of condemnation by a jury, might, as it appears to us at the end of thirty years, have redeemed some little of the disgrace which must for ever attach to the alarm system of 1817.

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CHAPTER X.

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PROSECUTIONS
FOR LIBEL.LORD SIDMOUTH'S
CIRCULAR.Hansard, vol.
xxxvi. p. 474.

ON moving the second reading of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, Lord Sidmouth made the following statement: "Some noble lords had complained that prosecutions had not been instituted against the authors, printers, or publishers, of infamous libels; but it was but justice to Government to state, that they had not neglected their duty with regard to these publications. As soon as they reached the hands of ministers, they were transmitted to the law officers of the crown, who felt that these publications were drawn up with so much dexterity,—the authors had so profited by former lessons of experience,—that greater difficulties to conviction presented themselves than at any former time." Within a month from this declaration Lord Sidmouth entrusted the administration of the law of libel to less scrupulous hands than the law officers of the crown. On the 27th of March the Secretary of State addressed his famous Circular Letter to the Lords Lieutenants of Counties, in which, urging the importance of preventing the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets, he stated that he had obtained the opinion of the law officers, that "a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him upon oath with the publication of libels of the nature in question, and compel him to give bail to answer the charge." He called, therefore, upon the Lords Lieutenants to communicate this opinion at the ensuing Quarter Sessions, so that all magistrates might act thereupon. Such a proceeding as this was perhaps the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts. It called forth from Lord Grey, on the 12th of May, one of the most luminous speeches which that statesman ever delivered. One passage may be fitly quoted: "In all the varieties of writing which may constitute the offence of libel, what is more difficult to be decided than the question of their guilt or innocence? What more exposed to the influence of undue motives in its decision? It has been formerly stated, by some of the most eminent persons in the profession of the law, nay, by almost all of them, to be so nice and difficult a question, that it could not be safely left even to a special jury: that they were only to find the fact of publication, and that the criminality of the writing, as a question of law, was exclusively for the decision of the court. This, my lords, was long contended for, and long acted upon as law; till, happily for the freedom of the press, and for the liberty of the country, of which the press is the great palladium, by the perseverance of my noble and learned friend (Lord Erskine), and by the exertions of the man whom, in public life, I most loved and admired (Mr. Fox), that principle was at length exploded; and by the libel bill it was at last established, that in prosecutions for libel, both the law and the fact were within the province of the jury, and to be determined by them. But, my lords, what avails this just and beneficent statute,—what security is there either for the freedom of the press, or

the liberty of the subject,—if, whilst you have imposed this salutary restraint upon the judges in trials for libel, you give to them, and to justices of the peace, before trial, a right to decide that difficult question; and to commit to prison (in many instances, perhaps, to inflict a severer punishment than the court upon conviction would adjudge) upon a charge which, after all, may turn out to have had no foundation, but in the false interpretation of words perfectly innocent, by the justice before whom the charge was brought? . . . If such be the power of the magistrate, and if this be the law, where, I ask, are all the boasted securities of our independence and freedom?" The House of Lords was indifferent to the preservation of these boasted securities. Writing four months after this debate to the Bishop of Durham, Lord Sidmouth says, "The attempt to check the progress of treason and blasphemy, by apprising the magistrates that they had the power of apprehending and holding to bail the publishers or venders of either, was one of the charges brought against me in the course of the last session. Such a charge it shall be my constant endeavour to deserve; and I am happy in being able to assure your lordship that the activity of the itinerant dealers in these articles is materially controlled, and their number greatly diminished." We apprehend that there cannot be the slightest doubt in most minds, at the present day, that this proceeding of Lord Sidmouth was most unconstitutional; and that he speaks and writes in defence of his conduct, with all the self-approval of the worst political bigot of the worst periods of tyranny. Truly did Sir Samuel Romilly say in the discussion of the same question, "By the constitution of this country there are only two modes in which the law, in matters of doubt, can be declared: one is, by the whole legislature by a declaratory statute; the other by the decisions of the judges upon points which have come judicially before them. It has been at all times thought of the utmost importance to prevent the law from being in any other way declared, and particularly to guard against the crown presuming to declare it. . . . The Circular, resting on the opinion of the law officers, had declared the laws of the land on a point that was before doubtful; and the Secretary of State, assisted by such advice as he could command, had thus assumed the functions of legislation."

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Life, vol. iii.
p. 176.

Hansard, vol.
xxxvi. p. 1162—
1165.

It is difficult to imagine a more degraded and dangerous position than that in which every political writer was placed during the year 1817. In the first place, he was subject, by a Secretary of State's warrant, to be imprisoned upon suspicion, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Secondly, he was open to an ex-officio information, under which he would be compelled to find bail, or be imprisoned. This power was extended so as to compel bail, by an act of 1808; but from 1808 to 1811, during which three years forty such informations were laid, only one person was held to bail. In 1817 numerous ex-officio informations were filed, and the almost invariable practice was to hold the alleged offender to bail, or in default to commit to prison. Under this act Mr. Hone and others were committed to prison during this year. To complete this triple cord with which the ministers believed they could bind down the 'man-mountain' of the press, came forth Lord Sidmouth's Circular. The entire course of these proceedings was a signal failure. There was only one solitary instance of success—William Cobbett ran away. On the 28th of

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Register,
March 28, 1817.

March he fled to America, suspending the publication of his 'Register' for four months. In his farewell paper he thus explains his motive for this new Hegira: "Lord Sidmouth was 'sorry to say' that I had not written anything that the law officers could prosecute with any chance of success. I do not remove for the purpose of writing libels, but for the purpose of being able to write what is not libellous. I do not retire from the combat with the Attorney General, but from a combat with a dungeon, deprived of pen, ink, and paper. A combat with the Attorney General is quite unequal enough. That, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by Special Jury is. Yet that, or any sort of trial, I would have staid to face. So that I could be sure of a trial of whatever sort, I would have run the risk. But, against the absolute power of imprisonment without even a hearing, for time unlimited, in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink, and paper, and without any communication with any soul but the keepers—against such a power it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive." It may be easy to call this apprehension cowardice; but there can be no doubt that Cobbett was the most dreaded of all the political writers of that time, by those who were terrified at the name of Parliamentary Reform. They were especially in fear of those of whose "dexterity" Lord Sidmouth complained. Cobbett went unscathed. The terrors of the law were reserved for more incautious and feebler delinquents.

HONE'S TRIALS.

On the 12th of May, Earl Grey mentioned in the House of Lords that a Mr. Hone was proceeded against for publishing some blasphemous parody; but he had read one of the same nature, written, printed, and published, some years ago by other people, without any notice having been officially taken of it. The parody to which Earl Grey alluded, and a portion of which he recited, was Canning's famous parody, "Praise Lepaux,"—an imitation of the *Benedicite*, and of passages in Job,—which was published in the 'Anti-Jacobin;' and he asked whether the authors, be they in the cabinet or in any other place, would also be found out and visited with the penalties of the law. This hint to the obscure publisher against whom these ex-officio informations had been filed for blasphemous and seditious parodies, was effectually worked out by him in the solitude of his prison, and in the poor dwelling where he had surrounded himself, as he had done from his earliest years, with a collection of odd and curious books, from which he had gathered an abundance of knowledge that was destined to perplex the technical acquirements of the Attorney General, to whom the sword and buckler of his precedents was wholly useless, and to change the determination of the boldest judge in the land to convict at any rate, into the prostration of helpless despair. Altogether the three trials of William Hone are amongst the most remarkable in our constitutional history. They produced more distinct effects upon the temper of the country than any public proceedings of that time. They taught the Government a lesson which has never been forgotten, and to which, as much as to any other cause, we owe the prodigious improvement as to the law of libel itself, and the use of the law, in our own day—an improvement which leaves what is dangerous in the press to be corrected by the remedial power of the press itself;—and which, instead of lamenting over the newly acquired ability of the masses to read seditious and irreligious works, depends upon the general diffusion of this ability as the

surest corrective of the evils that are incident even to the best gift of heaven, —that of knowledge. Wisely did our Milton say, "They are not skilful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin." The course that the "not skilful considerers of human things" took in 1817, was a course that they might have avoided had they listened to a great political teacher of two centuries before them: "The punishing of wits enhances their authority; and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seek to tread it out."

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Liberty of Un-
censored Printing.

Lord Bacon.

On the morning of the 18th of December there is a considerable crowd round the avenues of Guildhall. An obscure bookseller, a man of no substance or respectability in worldly eyes, is to be tried for libel. He vends his wares in a little shop in the Old Bailey, where there are, strangely mingled, two-penny political pamphlets, and old harmless folios that the poor publisher keeps for his especial reading as he sits in his dingy back parlour. The door-keepers and officers of the court scarcely know what is going to happen; for the table within the bar has not the usual covering of crimson bags, but ever and anon a dingy boy arrives with an armful of books of all ages and sizes, and the whole table is strewn with dusty and tattered volumes that the ushers are quite sure have no law within their mouldy covers. A middle-aged man, —a bland and smiling man,—with a half sad half merry twinkle in his eye,—a seedy man, to use an expressive word, whose black coat is wondrous brown and threadbare,—takes his place at the table, and begins to turn over the books which were his heralds. Sir Samuel Shepherd, the Attorney General, takes his seat; and looks compassionately, as was his nature to do, at the pale man in threadbare black. Mr. Justice Abbott arrives in due time; a Special Jury is sworn; the pleadings are opened; and the Attorney General states the case against William Hone, for printing and publishing an impious and profane libel upon the Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, thereby bringing into contempt the Christian religion. "It may be said," argued the Attorney General, "that the defendant's object was not to produce this effect. I believe that he meant it, in one sense, as a political squib; but his responsibility is not the less." As the Attorney General proceeded to read passages from the parody upon the Catechism, the crowd in court laughed; the bench was indignant; and the Attorney General said, the laugh was the fullest proof of the baneful effect of the defendant's publication. And so the trial went on in the smoothest way, and the case for the prosecution was closed. Then the pale man in black rose, and with a faltering voice set forth the difficulty he had in addressing the Court, and how his poverty prevented him obtaining counsel. And now he began to warm in the recital of what he thought his wrongs; his commitments; his hurried calls to plead; the expense of copies of the informations against him;—and as Mr. Justice Abbott, with perfect gentleness, but with his cold formality, interrupted him, the timid man, who all thought would have mumbled forth a hasty defence, grew bolder and bolder, and in a short time had possession of his audience as if he were "some well-graced actor" who was there to receive the tribute of popular admiration. "They were not to inquire whether he were a member of the established Church or a Dissenter; it was enough that he professed himself to be a Christian; and he would be bold to say, that he made that

Hone's First Trial,
p. 14.

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profession with a reverence for the doctrines of Christianity which could not be exceeded by any person in that court. He had his books about him, and it was from them that he must draw his defence. They had been the solace of his life. He was too much attached to his books to part with them. As to parodies, they were as old at least as the invention of printing; and he never heard of a prosecution for a parody, either religious or any other. There were two kinds of parodies; one in which a man might convey ludicrous or ridiculous ideas relative to some other subject; the other, where it was meant to ridicule the thing parodied. This latter was not the case here, and therefore he had not brought religion into contempt." This was the gist of William Hone's defence. To show fully how this argument was worked,—with what readiness, what coolness, what courage,—would be to transcribe the trials of three days; on the first of which the defendant spoke six hours, on the second seven hours, and on the last eight hours. It was in vain that the Attorney General urged that to bring forward any previous parody was the same thing as if a person charged with obscenity should produce obscene volumes in his defence. It was in vain that Mr. Justice Abbott repeated his wish that the defendant would not read such things. On he went, till interruption was held to be in vain. It was worse than vain; it was unjust. Truly did Hone reply to Mr. Justice Abbott, "My Lord, your Lordship's observation is in the very spirit of what Pope Leo the Tenth said to Martin Luther,—'For God's sake don't say a word about the indulgences and the monasteries, and I'll give you a living;'—thus precluding him from mentioning the very thing in dispute. I must go on with these parodies, or I cannot go on with my defence." Undauntedly he went on, from the current literature of the time, such as grave lawyers read in their few hours of recreation, to the forgotten volumes of old theology and polemical controversy, that the said grave lawyers of modern days are accustomed to regard as useless lumber. The editor of Blackwood's Magazine was a parodist,—he parodied a chapter of Ezekiel; Martin Luther was a parodist,—he parodied the first Psalm; Bishop Latimer was a parodist, and so was Dr. Boys, Dean of Canterbury; the author of the 'Rolliad' was a parodist; and so was Mr. Canning. Passage after passage did Mr. Hone read from author after author. He thought it was pretty clear that Martin Luther did not mean to ridicule the Psalms; that Dr. Boys did not mean to ridicule the Lord's Prayer; that Mr. Canning did not mean to ridicule the Scriptures. Why, then, should it be presumed, that he had such an intention? As soon as he found that his Parodies had been deemed offensive, he had suppressed them, and that he had done long before his prosecution. It was in vain that the Attorney General replied that Martin Luther was a libeller, and Dr. Boys was a libeller. The Judge charged the Jury in vain. William Hone was acquitted, after a quarter of an hour's deliberation.

Second Trial.

But Guildhall "saw another sight." With the next morning's fog, the fiery Lord Chief Justice rose from his bed, and with lowering brow took his place in that judgment-seat which he deemed had been too mercifully filled on the previous day. The mild firmness of the poor publisher, and his gentlemanly sense of the absence of harshness in the conduct of his first trial, had won for him something like respect; and when on one occasion Mr. Justice Abbott asked him to forbear reading a particular parody, and the defendant

said, "Your Lordship and I understand each other, and we have gone on so good-humouredly hitherto, that I will not break in upon our harmony," it became clear that the puisne judge was not the man to enforce a verdict of guilty on the second trial. Again Mr. Hone entered the court with his load of books, on Friday, the 19th of December. He was this day indicted for publishing an impious and profane libel, called 'The Litany, or General Supplication.' Again the Attorney-General affirmed that whatever might be the object of the defendant, the publication had the effect of scoffing at the public service of the Church. Again the defendant essayed to read from his books, which course he contended was essentially necessary for his defence. Then began a contest which is perhaps unparalleled in an English court of justice. Upon Mr. Fox's libel bill, upon ex-officio informations, upon his right to copies of the indictment without extravagant charges, the defendant battled his judge,—imperfect in his law, no doubt, but with a firmness and moderation that rode over every attempt to put him down. Parody after parody was again produced, and especially those parodies of the Litany which the Cavaliers employed so frequently as vehicles of satire upon the Roundheads and Puritans. The Lord Chief Justice at length gathered up his exhausted strength for his charge; and concluded in a strain that left but little hope for the defendant: "He would deliver the Jury his solemn opinion, as he was required by Act of Parliament to do; and under the authority of that act, and still more in obedience to his conscience and his God, he pronounced this to be a most impious and profane libel. Believing and hoping that they, the Jury, were Christians, he had not any doubt but that they would be of the same opinion." The Jury, in an hour and a half, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

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It might have been expected that these prosecutions would have here ended. Third Trial, p. 12. But the chance of a conviction from a third Jury, upon a third indictment, was to be risked. On the 20th of December, Lord Ellenborough again took his seat on the bench, and the exhausted defendant came late into court, pale and agitated. The Attorney General remarked upon his appearance, and offered to postpone the proceedings. The courageous man made his election to go on. This third indictment was for publishing a parody on the Creed of St. Athanasius, called 'The Sinecurist's Creed.' After the Attorney General had finished his address, Mr. Hone asked for five minutes' delay, to arrange the few thoughts he had been committing to paper. The Judge refused the small concession; but said that he would postpone the proceedings to another day, if the defendant would request the Court so to do. The scene which ensued was thoroughly dramatic. "No! I make no such request. My Lord, I am very glad to see your Lordship here to-day, because I feel I sustained an injury from your Lordship yesterday—an injury which I did not expect to sustain. . . . If his Lordship should think proper, on this trial to-day, to deliver his opinion, I hope that opinion will be coolly and dispassionately expressed by his Lordship. . . . My Lord, I think it necessary to make a stand here. I cannot say what your Lordship may consider to be necessary interruption; but your Lordship interrupted me a great many times yesterday, and then said you would interrupt me no more, and yet your Lordship did interrupt me afterwards ten times as much. . . . Gentlemen, it is you who are trying me

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to-day. His Lordship is no judge of me. You are my judges, and you only are my judges. His Lordship sits there to receive your verdict. . . . I will not say what his Lordship did yesterday; but I trust his Lordship to-day will give his opinion coolly and dispassionately, without using either expression or gesture which could be construed as conveying an entreaty to the Jury to think as he did. I hope the Jury will not be beseeched into a verdict of guilty." The triumph of the weak over the powerful was complete. "The frame of adamant and soul of fire," as the biographer of Lord Sidmouth terms the Chief Justice, quailed before the indomitable courage of a man who was roused into energies which would seem only to belong to the master-spirits that have swayed the world. Yet this was a man who, in the ordinary business of life, was incapable of enterprise and persevering exertion; who lived in the nooks and corners of his antiquarianism; who was one that even his old political opponents came to regard as a gentle and innocuous hunter after "all such reading as was never read;" who in a few years gave up his politics altogether, and, devoting himself to his old poetry and his old divinity, passed a quarter of a century after this conflict in peace with all mankind, and died the sub-editor of a religious journal. It was towards the close of this remarkable trial, that the Judge, who came eager to condemn, sued for pity to his intended victim. The defendant quoted Warburton and Tillotson, as doubters of the authenticity of the Athanasian Creed. "Even his Lordship's father, the Bishop of Carlisle, he believed, took a similar view of the Creed." And then the Judge solemnly said, "Whatever that opinion was, he has gone, many years ago, where he has had to account for his belief and his opinions. . . . For common delicacy forbear."—"O, my Lord, I shall certainly forbear." Grave and temperate was the charge to the Jury this day; and in twenty minutes they returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. iii., p. 236.

On Sunday, the 21st of December, the day after this last trial, Lord Ellenborough wrote thus to Lord Sidmouth: "The disgraceful events which have occurred at Guildhall within the last three or four days have led me, both on account of the public and myself, to consider very seriously my own sufficiency, particularly in point of bodily health and strength, to discharge the official duties of my station in the manner in which, at the present critical moment, it is peculiarly necessary they should be discharged. . . . I wish to carry my meditated purpose of resignation into effect, as soon as the convenience of Government, in regard to the due selection and appointment of my successor, may allow."

We have said that the proceedings of the Government in the libel matters of 1817 were signal failures. A few miserable hawkers were held to bail, or sent to prison, under Lord Sidmouth's Circular; some *ex-officio* informations were filed, with only one conviction,—that of a printer in the country, who republished one of Hone's parodies, and was tried before Hone himself. As to the three acquittals we have described, it is perfectly evident that three Juries, consisting of respectable London merchants, would have assuredly convicted the defendant, had they not felt that the real sting of the alleged profaneness was the severity of the political satire. Although the indictment stated that these parodies were seditious as well as profane, the sedition was studiously kept in the background. Had they not been really prosecuted for their politi-

cal doctrines, their unquestionable indecency and impropriety must have carried a verdict against them on the first trial. The second and third trials looked like persecution; and public opinion threw its shield over the offender.

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A letter from Mr. Ward [Lord Dudley] to the Bishop of Llandaff, exhibits a striking example of the difference of opinion that existed in high quarters as to the prosecution of Hone. The personal friend of George Canning, writing to a most pious and learned dignitary of the Church, responds to the sentiments of that dignitary that this transaction was uncalled for and oppressive. "I am particularly gratified with what you say about the business of Hone. It is an additional proof (if any were wanting) of your superiority to those prejudices with which place and profession might have inspired a man of less sound understanding, and a less independent character. I have been inclined all along to think, and what you say confirms me in the opinion, that the prosecution was discreditable to the Government and its law advisers. Not that I believe they were actuated by tyrannical principles. It was a mere blunder; but the success of it would have afforded a very mischievous precedent for bad times. Certainly this man meant no good either to Church or State; and that is reason enough for the whole race of methodistical Tories (who are guided entirely by their own feelings as to the particular case, without any regard to, or knowledge of, the general principles of justice), to be sadly grieved that his ears were not cropped, as they would have been by the Star-Chamber. That famous tribunal no doubt had its merits. It punished many scoundrels that could not have been got at by a regular course of law, and was therefore an object of admiration so long as it lasted, and of regret when it fell, to precisely the same sort of persons that now mourn over the acquittal of Hone."

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 190.

CHAPTER XI.

1817.

DEATH OF THE
PRINCESS
CHARLOTTE.

THE death of the Presumptive Heiress of the British Crown, after the birth of a dead child, was the great historical event of 1817. Never was a whole nation plunged in such deep and universal grief. From the highest to the lowest, this death was felt as a calamity that demanded the intense sorrow of domestic misfortune. Around every fireside there were suppressed tears and bitter remembrances. The most solemn disclaimer was uttered, through this universal mourning, of the foul calumny against the people, that they were desirous of a vital change in their laws and institutions. Whatever might be their complaints, they showed, on this occasion, that their attachment to a constitutional monarchy was undiminished by factious contests or real grievances; and that they looked with exulting hopes to the days when a patriot Queen should diffuse the sunlight of just government through every corner of a prosperous and happy land.

The affection which the people of Great Britain cherished for the Princess Charlotte was ardent, but it was discriminating. It was a tribute to principles and to conduct. It was something much better than that unreflecting gallantry which would have called "a thousand swords from their scabbards" to have defended personal charms; it was the admiration of private virtue disciplining itself for public service. The Princess Charlotte seemed born to build up for generations the succession to the British Crown, by calling around her own person the warmest devotion of a zealous but a reflecting people. A female Sovereign can best make duty choice, and obedience happiness. What the birth of this Princess promised, her education ripened, and her own love of real glory perfected. Her early years were devoted to an assiduous preparation for her maturer honours. Her studies were manly, and such as befitted the probable successor to the glories of an Elizabeth. She was disciplined in the school of religion and of philosophy. While she was habituated to those Christian exercises, in the performance of which the reigning Sovereign and his family furnished so excellent an example, she stored up lessons for future practice in her probable destiny, by a ceaseless contemplation of the characters of the truly great of all ages and countries. She knew the fountains of her country's glory, she revered the founders of its well-balanced constitution, her heart vowed an early allegiance to her nation's liberty. In the cultivation of the accomplishments of her sex, while she displayed an almost unlimited talent, she never lost sight of their legitimate ends and uses. Her exercises and her amusements were equally associated with her preparation for domestic and public duties. The people exulted in the maturity of her person and her mind. She stood, as was hoped amongst her future subjects, a beautiful, an accomplished, a noble-hearted woman. She seemed equally fitted to command reverence by the strength, and win affection by the graces, of her mind. Her state was not supported by ostentation, her greatness was not asserted by pride, her dignity

did not estrange her from the lowly and the poor. Raised above the great portion of society, she deeply felt her alliance with the universal family of the earth; and while her endeavour was to purify herself from the follies and weaknesses of mankind, she delighted to partake their sympathies, to assuage their misfortunes, to merit by her benevolence the homage which was paid to her rank.

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A Princess so gifted was not a being that would permit her affections to be sacrificed at the altar of political calculation. She well knew that domestic happiness is the best foundation for public virtue. She felt that in the tranquillity of connubial enjoyment, the heart has no repining cares to interrupt the search for truth—no restless anticipations or regrets to turn the thoughts away from active duty, or contemplative preparation. She wisely asserted her own right to choose for herself in the most important action of her life. The nation hailed and revered her motives. The Prince of her choice brought neither extent of territory, nor continental influence; but he brought an unsophisticated mind; an active, firm, inquiring, and amiable temper; a meek and affectionate heart. Their tastes were alike, their happiness was alike. In dignified retirement they lived calmly and unobtrusively, in that enviable tranquillity which is so congenial to British feeling. Their amusements were elegant and simple; their exercises of duty were habitual and uniform. In the pursuit of health and of knowledge, their days passed away in that serenity which devotion and benevolence stimulated and confirmed. A glorious prospect was open to them of passing the summer of life in the discipline of domestic virtue, and the autumn in a far more extended exercise of the same principles. These hopes perished in an hour!

Thirty years ago, when, “without the slightest warning, without the opportunity of a moment’s immediate preparation, in the midst of the deepest tranquillity, at midnight a voice was heard in the palace, not of singing men and singing women, not of revelry and mirth, but the cry, Behold the bridegroom cometh,”—the nation first wept, and then grew angry. There had been neglect, at any rate. The greatest in the land had been less helped in her need, it was affirmed, than the humblest peasant wife. Lord Eldon used to relate that, after the labour was over, he “went into the room where the surgeons were consulting what bulletin of the Princess they should send, and they had actually drawn one up, stating that she was going on as favourably as possible, when Baillie came in, and, after reading it, he refused to sign it, for such was not his opinion. We [the Cabinet Ministers] returned to our homes about two o’clock in the morning, and before six a messenger arrived to let us know the Princess was dead.” Sir Richard Croft, against whom the public odium was chiefly directed, became in a few months after his own self-destroyer.

Robert Hall’s
Funeral Sermon,
&c.

Lord Eldon’s Life
vol. ii. p. 299.

Amongst the fears that accompanied the death of the Princess Charlotte was the apprehension that “a barren sceptre” might pass through the hands of the illustrious family that freed these realms from a despotic sway. That apprehension was dissipated by the subsequent marriages of the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, and Cambridge. It is a remarkable example of the vanity of human fears, that the people who wept, as a people without hope, for the bereavement of Charlotte Augusta, should have realized through

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her premature death, precisely such a female reign, of just and mild government, of domestic virtues, of generous sympathy with popular rights, of bold and liberal encouragement of sound improvement, as they had associated with her career—perhaps more than they had thought, in that season of disquiet, could ever be realized in a few coming years.

In the pleasing record of those years which were years of Progress, we shall not have to enumerate the year 1817. It has left not the slightest trace of public good. At the beginning of the Session ministers sanctioned the appointment of a Finance Committee. In three months the Committee brought forward a measure, for the gradual abolition of sinecures, which Lord Castlereagh supported, because it would not diminish the influence of the Crown; would produce no large reduction of expense; but would convince the people that Parliament was doing every thing possible to relieve their burthens. It appeared that savings were to be effected by the abolition of sinecures to the amount of £51,000; instead of which the Committee recommended the substitution of a Pension List to the amount of £42,000. This bitter mockery of the public expectations was a new source of discontent.

SINECURES.

Hansard, vol.
xxxvi. p. 128, &c.

ROMAN CATHOLIC
CLAIMS.

The Roman Catholic Claims were debated at great length during this Session. Of the debate on the 9th of May, Mr. Wilberforce makes this brief entry in his Diary. "Roman Catholic Question decided. I would not speak. Canning poor—Peel excellent—Lord Castlereagh very good." The debate occupies a hundred columns of Hansard's Reports. We reserve for another occasion a general view of the course of this great question. The majority against the Roman Catholics in 1817, was twenty-four.

PARLIAMENTARY
REFORM.

Life of Wilber-
force, vol. iv.
p. 315.

From this year we may date the retrogression of the cause of Parliamentary Reform, which continued to go back, or stand still, as long as the middle classes were afraid of its agitation. Writing to a friend in 1817, Mr. Wilberforce says, "I continue friendly to the moderate, gradual, and almost insensibly operating Parliamentary Reform, which was last brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the more intelligent people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view, so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation of it. But it is a serious and very strong objection to its present consideration, that the efforts of certain demagogues have had too much success in influencing the minds of the lowest of the people in several of our manufacturing districts, most falsely persuading them that the evils under which we at present labour are owing to the state of our parliamentary representation, and that they would be cured by a parliamentary reform." The rash movements of the operative classes in 1816,—their violent declamations, their tumultuous meetings,—proceeded in most cases from an ignorant but honest spirit. They had been taught, as some demagogues still continue to teach, that all the evils of civilization are political evils. A few scoundrels, a few spies, and a few zealots of the operative class, placed the weapon of alarm in the hands of the Government of 1817; and, what was more, laid the foundation for those miserable conflicts and mutual suspicions, on the part of the capitalists and the labourers, which are still amongst the most serious obstacles to all large mitigations of the inequalities of society, however we may all be improved in the common wish for Christian brotherhood.

CHAPTER XII.*

THE period at which we are arrived was remarkable for a series of achievements in India, under the administration of the Marquess of Hastings, at that time Earl of Moira. His lordship was nominated Governor-General on the 18th of November, 1812, and, arriving in India, Lord Minto resigned the government to him on the 4th of October, 1813. He was obliged to attend almost immediately to matters of war, for the Birmans, or Burmese, continued to trouble one of the frontiers of our empire, while the Nepaulese made encroachments on another. The Birmans were brought to reason for the present; but the Nepaulese spurned negotiation, and were to be reduced only by force. The Gorkhas, who domineered over a great part of Nepaul, retained that passion for war and conquest to which they owed their recently established dominion, and by which they hoped to extend their empire in Hindustan. Their far extended frontier pressed everywhere upon the territories of the Company, or the territory of the Company's allies or dependents; and except in the neighbourhood of our military stations, it was found difficult or almost impossible to check the border forays of the Nepaulese or the quarrels that were constantly breaking out. In the month of May, 1814, while some negotiations were still pending, the Nepaulese treacherously attacked and murdered all the police-officers stationed in Bootwul. The Earl of Moira determined to send armies to deal with these troublesome neighbours, and, after two campaigns, they were effectually subdued.

In the meanwhile our Indian armies were drawn into the field by new enemies. The Pindarrees were not a distinctive race, but a numerous class of men of different races, religions, and habits, gradually associating and assimilated by a common pursuit. They were all horsemen and all robbers. Their name first occurs in Indian history about the end of the seventeenth century. From obscure freebooters, they rose into sufficient consequence to be deemed useful auxiliaries by the different Mahratta powers, whose desultory mode of warfare was suited to their own habits. From their preceding or accompanying Mahratta armies, the Pindarrees became occasionally confounded with the Mahrattas, though they were always considered by the latter as essentially distinct, and so immeasurably inferior as not to be allowed to eat with them or even to be seated in their presence. Occasionally the Mahratta rulers purchased their aid by grants of land or by a tacit admission of their right to possess tracts which they had already usurped. But the more usual price paid for their assistance was the privilege of plundering, even beyond the ordinary licence given to a Mahratta army. At times some of their durras

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PINDARREE WAR.

Sir John Malcolm,
Memoir of Central
India.

* This chapter is abridged from Mr. MacFarlane's able work, "Our Indian Empire," of which the publisher possesses the copyright.

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acted for one Mahratta chief, and some on the opposite side for another Mahratta chief; and it occasionally happened that all the durras leagued themselves against the whole Mahratta confederacy, plundering the territories of the Peishwa, Scindiah, the Nagpoor Rajah, &c., indiscriminately. As the Pindarree chiefs acquired reputation, their claims to the services of their adherents became hereditary, and were transmitted to their descendants. Gangs and tribes were cemented in federal union, and common motives of action led to the establishment of a community of interest throughout the whole of this community of robbers. The very looseness of the composition of their union was favourable to its increase, as it admitted all castes and all faiths, and offered a ready refuge to poverty, indolence, and crime—to all that was floating and unattached in the frequently revolutionized communities of Central India. What their numbers were could at no time be correctly estimated: they varied with circumstances, being thinned by failure and swelled by success. “It is also to be observed,” says Sir John Malcolm, “that the Pindarrees were fed and nourished by the very miseries they created; for, as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations were afterwards compelled to have recourse to a life of violence, as the only means of subsistence left them. They joined the stream which they could not withstand, and endeavoured to redeem their own losses by the plunder of others.” The strategy of these overgrown bodies of banditti will show at once how difficult it was

either to suppress them or intercept them. “When they set out on an expedition, they placed themselves under the guidance of one or more chosen leaders, called Lubburiahs, who were selected on account of their knowledge of the country that it was meant to plunder. The Pindarrees were encumbered neither with tents nor baggage; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence, and some feeds of grain for his horse. The party, which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse, with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a day, turning neither to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find, committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued they made marches of extraordinary length (sometimes upwards of sixty miles), by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and reassembled at an appointed rendezvous; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties. Their wealth, their booty, and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves or to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected; but nowhere did they present any point of attack; and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some of their strongholds, produced no effect beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by

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another, generally of more desperate fortune, and therefore more eager for enterprise." They never fought when they could run away; they considered it wisdom to plunder and fly, but folly to stay and fight. Even when acting with the Mahrattas as auxiliaries, their object was plunder, not war. They went before, indeed, but it was only by surprise or in defenceless provinces; they were, from their very origin, the scavengers of the Mahrattas; and though in the van, they had little more pretension to martial conduct or valour than had the birds and beasts of prey that followed in their and their allies' rear. Some of their chiefs, however, united to the qualities so essential to their profession—activity, cunning, ready enterprise, presence of mind, and promptitude of resources—a wonderful strength of mind (or it might be apathy) in bearing the reverses of fortune and the privations of their lot. Foremost among these chiefs was Cheetoo. This man first attracted the attention of the English towards the end of 1806, when, raising himself on the temporary ruin of Kureem, another Pindarree chief, who had incurred the displeasure of one of the Mahratta potentates, and had been inveigled and made prisoner, he united the durras or bands of many other leaders under his own standard, and prepared to commit depredations on an unprecedentedly grand scale. Numerous and profitable to himself, and altogether ruinous to the inhabitants of many wide districts of Hindustan, were the expeditions undertaken by Cheetoo on his own account. But in 1811 the captive Pindarree, Kureem, purchasing his liberty from the Mahrattas, returned to the scenes of his former power, and soon obtained his former supremacy. To make up for lost time, and to restore his reputation among the robbers, Kureem laid his plans to effect a general combination of all the Pindarree bands for a predatory expedition more extensive than any that had hitherto been made. Cheetoo was obliged to follow the example of the majority of his fellow-chiefs; and at the great gathering of 1811 his durra made part of 25,000 cavalry of all descriptions, that were ready, under the command of Kureem, to march against and plunder the city of Nagpoor, the large and populous capital of the Boonsla Mahrattas. But Cheetoo, who continued to hate Kureem as a rival, plotted against him, sold himself to his enemies, and went over to them with all his durra. Not long after this he entirely ruined Kureem, and obliged him to flee with his diminished adherents to a distant country. Cheetoo again shone forth on his rival's eclipse, and at his cantonment near Nemawur, in the province of Malwa, on the north bank of the Nerbudda, no fewer than 15,000 horse annually assembled to issue forth to plunder. As the territories of the Company and those of its protected allies offered the richest booty, the eyes of the Pindarrees were always bent in that direction. This imposed the necessity of constant vigilance along the whole extent of the south-west frontier of the Bengal presidency; while, for the security of the Deccan, the subsidiary forces of the Nizam and Peishwa were annually obliged to move to the frontiers of their respective territories; and notwithstanding all these precautions, those states were constantly penetrated and overrun by the marauders.

The reverses and losses sustained in the first campaign in Nepaul in 1814, encouraged the Pindarrees. In October, 1815, when our main army was fully occupied in forcing the stockades of the Gorkhas, Cheetoo crossed the Nerbudda with nearly 8000 of his Pindarrees. On the southern side of the river

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they broke into two parties and took opposite routes. Major Fraser, with 300 sepoy and 100 irregular native horse, surprised one of the parties in a bivouac, and made them suffer some loss before they could mount, gallop off, and disperse. But this did not deter them from continuing their depredations as far as the black river, the Krishna or Kistna. The other party, which had met with no such molestation, traversed the whole of the territory of our ally the Nizam of the Deccan, from north to south, and also appeared on the banks of the Kistna. The territories of our Madras presidency lay on the other side of the river, and were saved from devastation only by the fortuitous circumstance of the river's continuing not fordable so unusually late in the season as the 20th of November. "Finding the Kistna impassable, the freebooters took a turn eastward, plundering the country for several miles along its populous and fertile banks, and committing every kind of enormity. On approaching the frontier of Masulipatam, they shaped their course northward, and returned along the line of the Godavoree (Godavery) and Wurda, passing to the east of all Colonel Doveton's positions, and making good their route to Nemawur (Cheetoo's head-quarters), with an immense booty collected in the Nizam's dominions, and with utter impunity." Elated by his success, Cheetoo planned and proclaimed a second lubbur, or raid, immediately upon the return of the first. The Pindarrees again flocked in from every side to join in it; and by the 5th of February, 1816, 10,000 horsemen had again crossed the Nerbudda from Nemawur. This time, the Company's territories did not escape. On the 10th of March, leaving plundered and burning villages in their rear, the Pindarrees appeared on the western frontier of the district of Masulipatam, under the Madras presidency. From this point they pressed southward. On the 11th they made a march of thirty-three miles, plundered seventy-two villages, and committed the most horrid cruelties upon the inoffensive and helpless villagers. On the next day they destroyed fifty-four villages, marched thirty-eight miles, and arrived at the civil station of Guntoor. Here they plundered a considerable part of the town, and the houses of all the civil officers; but, steady to their system of never risking life or limb in battle, they shrunk from the collector's office, where the government treasure and the persons of the British residents were protected by a handful of sepoy and invalids. The robbers went off as they came, suddenly and noiselessly. That night there was not one of them to be seen in the neighbourhood, and before the next day closed they were more than fifty miles from Guntoor, looking westward for more defenceless villages. They swept through the Kirpah or Cuddapah district, and, after being twelve days within the Company's frontier, they recrossed the Kistna. A squadron of native cavalry belonging to the Madras establishment reached the opposite bank of the Kistna just after they had made good their passage. Farther to the west there were numerous detachments of the Company's troops scouring the country in all directions, yet the plunderers escaped without the least brush. Shortly after recrossing the Kistna the marauders broke up into separate bodies. The greater part moved along the north bank of the Kistna, passing south of Hyderabad, until they approached the Peishwa's dominions. Then, turning short to the north, they retraced their steps to the Nerbudda in several divisions and by various routes. Colonel Doveton came close up with

one of the divisions as it was passing a ghaut, but still the robbers escaped untouched. Another and a larger body was equally fortunate in escaping from the colonel, who had obtained from a Pindarree prisoner a clue to its movements, and who had made sure of cutting it up. It was soon afterwards ascertained that nearly the whole of these Pindarrees who had passed the Nerbudda on the 5th of February had recrossed it before the 17th of May, bringing a second immense harvest of booty to Nemawur within the year. It was ascertained by a commission appointed for the express purpose of the investigation, that, during the twelve days the ferocious banditti remained within the Company's frontiers, three hundred and thirty-nine villages had been plundered, one hundred and eighty-two individuals put to a cruel death, five hundred and five severely wounded, and no less than three thousand six hundred and three subjected to different kinds of torture.

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The Governor-General obtained certain information that the Peishwa, Scindiah, and other Mahratta potentates, were in close and friendly correspondence with the robbers, and that Mahratta agents had visited Cheetoo's cantonment at Nemawur just before the last raid was undertaken; and there was every ground for believing that the new Mahratta confederacy contemplated an invasion of our territories while our main army was engaged in Nepaul, and the rest of our troops in the field occupied in an exhausting and useless pursuit of the Pindarrees. His lordship, who saw the Nepaul war brought to an honourable and advantageous conclusion, at the very moment when both the Mahrattas and the Pindarrees were confidently calculating on its duration, was most eager to employ the unreduced strength of his armies in the accomplishment of the important object of securing the peace of Central India by the extirpation of the robbers. He had written for the sanction of the home authorities, and had made a second strong representation of the horrors to which the country was exposed; but the sanction he required before commencing operations on a grand scale had not yet arrived. A large part of the Bengal army was, however, kept in advanced cantonments ready to take the field at any moment. The Governor-General at length received the sanction of the home authorities to his scheme for breaking up the confederacy and power of those banditti.

By the end of October, 1816, Lieutenant-Colonel Walker took up a defensive line on the southern bank of the Nerbudda, with the main body of the subsidiary force which the Company had sent into Nagpoor. This defensive line, being nearly one hundred and fifty miles in length, was loose and weak; but the first appearance of a British army in the valley of the Nerbudda spread consternation among the robbers, and induced Cheetoo to prepare to quit the northern bank of that river and cross the mountains into Malwa. Perceiving, however, that the troops did not cross the Nerbudda, the Pindarrees recovered confidence; and on the 4th of November they resolved to push small parties between Colonel Walker's posts and round his flanks; and a party crossed the river, and then dividing into two, took different directions. Colonel Walker, in attempting to intercept one of the divisions, unexpectedly fell upon the other as it was bivouacking in a jungle; he inflicted some loss; but the nimble robbers were soon in the saddle, and before long they had recrossed the river. On the 13th of November all the durras were in motion. Cheetoo had

1817. discovered that Walker's cavalry was all on his left flank, and he therefore threw forward more than five thousand of his well-mounted thieves to turn Walker's right flank. This band, which appears to have been followed by others, crossed the river in sight of the infantry post on the extreme right of our line, and then dashed on with a rapidity which left our infantry no chance of stopping or harassing their march. When collected on the southern side of the Nerbudda, the Pindarrees separated into two great bodies. One swept due east, through forests and over mountains, and fell unexpectedly upon the Company's district of Ganjam, the northernmost frontier of the five Circars, with the evident intention of proceeding to Cuttack and Juggernaut, to plunder the rich stronghold of Hindu superstition, to carry off the idols and the votive offerings and rich donations of the pilgrims and devotees. But this lubbur was met by a small body of the Company's troops almost as soon as it entered Ganjam, and was driven back with considerable loss. The other lubbur, which had gone off to the southward, rushed into the Nizam's territory before Colonel Doveton could come up with it. It then marched leisurely along, plundering and destroying, until it came near to the town of Beeder, the capital of a province of the Deccan, and about 73 north-west from Hyderabad. Here it came to a halt, and its chiefs disagreed as to the further course which ought to be pursued. While the leaders were in this state of indecision, Major Macdowall, who had been detached from Hyderabad, fell upon the lubbur by night with the van party of his light troops, and cut it up completely, although it was six thousand strong, and the first attack made by a mere handful of light cavalry. The robbers abandoned most of their horses and the greater part of their booty, dispersed themselves over the country, and thought of nothing but their personal safety, and of the means of returning to the northern side of the Nerbudda. But one leader, named Sheik Dullo, indignant at the want of energy and concert betrayed by those who had the chief command, had abandoned this lubbur altogether a few days before Macdowall's exploit, and had gone off with from three to five hundred Pindarrees to act for himself. He dashed across the Peishwa's territory, descended into the Konkan, and thence shaped his course due north, plundering the western shores of India, from the 17th to the 21st degree of north latitude, and returning by the valley of the Taptee, and the route of Boorhanpoor, the capital of the Candeish province of the Deccan. This was the only lubbur that met with any success this season. The only loss it sustained from British troops was on its return to the Nerbudda, in the following March. Here Sheik Dullo and his people were within a few miles of home, or of Cheetoo's cantonment; but they found the ford by which they had hoped to cross the river guarded by a redoubt occupied by a small party of our sepoys. Several of the robbers were shot in attempting to dash across; but the sheik himself, with his main body and best-mounted followers, retiring from the ford, boldly swam the river lower down, though not without a further loss of men and horses. Those who had worse horses or less courage dispersed, and fled into the jungle on the English side of the Nerbudda, where the greater part of them were cut off by the wild inhabitants of the country. By the various accidents of flood and fire more than one half of those who had followed Sheik Dullo perished; but the rest reached Cheetoo's durra with a rich booty in their saddles. The

sheik's fame waxed great : his daring lubbur and his marvellous return became the admired theme of the whole Pindarree world.

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Two or three other lubburs had contrived to cross the Nerbudda by passing between the distant posts of Colonel Walker's line, or by turning that line ; but they met with nothing except hard blows and disappointment. One of them was cut to pieces by the 4th Madras native cavalry, led on by Major Lushington. Making a forced march of more than 50 miles, the greater part by night, Lushington surprised the Pindarrees as they were cooking and eating, and presently strewed the field with some seven or eight hundred of their dead bodies. As the ground was open, the Madras cavalry pursued with good effect. The Ganjam lubbur was almost annihilated on its rapid return homeward ; and as the different ghauts and fords by which they must pass in order to get to the north bank of the Nerbudda were by degrees all guarded, very few of the remnants of the other shattered lubburs ever reached their homes. Hosts of them were cut off by our sepoys, and by the people whom they had plundered in their advance. They had been continually fleeing before a handful of men, and had been beaten every time they had been met with. Still, however, their depredations during this campaign or season of 1816-17 had embraced a more ample expanse of territory than had ever before been attempted, extending from shore to shore of the peninsula of India, and including all the intermediate provinces they had omitted the preceding year.

By this time it was very completely demonstrated that stationary posts of defence could not prevent the Pindarrees from crossing the Nerbudda and getting into our territories ; and that it would not be possible to deal properly with those plunderers and murderers, unless our troops advanced into the country north of the Nerbudda, to the "procreant cradle" of the infamous race.

During the rains of this year the Pindarrees, well knowing that the English were coming against them into the regions beyond the Nerbudda, made great efforts to recruit their durras, and to concert some general plan of defence. But disagreements broke out among the chiefs, particularly between Cheetoo and his old rival Kureem, and no consistent plan could be formed. Their superstitions were alarmed by evil omens, such as a great fire that broke out in Kureem's camp in the month of September, and destroyed all the valuables of his durra. Generally, however, the Pindarrees relied, first on their own rapidity of movement, and next on the potency of the hostile league which they knew to be forming among the Mahrattas against the English. When the rains were over they made some very unsuccessful attempts to break into our territories. They were everywhere headed back ; and they were soon pressed and pursued, and driven from their haunts beyond the Nerbudda by the several corps of Major-General Marshall and Colonel Sir John Malcolm. The last-named officer, who has written the best account of the Pindarrees, and who had the most active share in the operations which destroyed them, had been absent in England, and had returned just in time to take the command of one of the corps of the Marquess of Hastings's army. Malcolm, being informed of Cheetoo's flight to the westward, resolved to follow him as the most able and dangerous of the robbers ; and he accordingly marched as far as Agur. Here he learned that Cheetoo had pitched his camp close to that of

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the Holkar Mahrattas: that he had been received with friendship and distinction, and that those Mahrattas were fully determined to support the robber and to oppose the operations of the British. They had just received from the Peishwa an advance of a lac and sixty thousand rupees. Upon this intelligence Sir John Malcolm fell back to the neighbourhood of Oojein, a town of great celebrity in Malwa, where another corps d'armée was collected under the command of Sir Thomas Hislop. While these forces lay at Oojein, another revolution and murder took place in the Holkar camp. The young heir to the musnud was enticed away from the tent in which he was playing, and his mother, who was acting as regent, was seized at night and beheaded, as a traitress sold to the English. Having done these deeds, the Patan chiefs became clamorous for battle; and the whole Holkar army, advancing rapidly, plundered part of the English baggage. The next day (the 21st of December, 1817) they met their reward in the bloody battle of Maheidpoor. There, strongly posted on the banks of the Sepra river (into whose waters they had thrown the headless body of the regent), they were beaten, bayoneted, cut to pieces, deprived of all their artillery, amounting to seventy pieces, and of everything that gave them the character of an army. The remnant of their force fled to the large walled town of Rampoor, in the heart of the province of Malwa. Sir John Malcolm formed the plan of the battle, and headed the assault on the left flank of the enemy. Lieut.-Colonels Scott, Macdowall, and Russell, Major James L. Lushington, and other officers, greatly distinguished themselves in the action. The British casualties were unusually severe, amounting to 174 killed and 604 wounded. Among the wounded were 35 officers, of whom 15 were severely injured. In the pursuit, which was continued by Sir John Malcolm and Captain Grant along both banks of the river Sepra, immense booty was obtained, including elephants, some hundreds of camels, &c.

Sir John Malcolm advanced rapidly towards the capital of the Holkars, being joined on the way by the Bombay army from Guzerat, under the orders of Major-General Sir William Keir. Those Mahrattas now agreed to and hastily concluded a treaty of peace, placing their territories under British protection, and surrendering in perpetuity to the Company various districts, forts, and ghauts. The treaty was scarcely concluded ere some of the Patan chiefs attempted to break it; but these desperadoes were defeated and most of their adherents slaughtered in Rampoor by some detachments of infantry and cavalry under General Brown. A few more marches and two or three stormings of forts reduced the whole of the country of the Holkar Mahrattas to a state of obedience. These rapid successes kept Scindiah steady to the treaty which he had recently concluded, and deprived the wandering Peishwa of almost his last hope. They also enabled our troops to follow the Pindarrees, who were now flying in all directions, like sea-fowl in a storm. Some of Cheetoo's durra had followed the Patan chiefs to Maheidpoor; but after our victory there, Cheetoo fled to shift for himself, seeing that no aid was to be expected from the Mahrattas. He was closely followed by the Guzerat army of Sir William Keir, who surprised him and cut up part of his durra in the neighbourhood of Satoolla. Harassed by the activity of Sir William's pursuit, and finding that other corps were closing fast round them, the marauders endea-

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voured to retrace their steps to their old haunts in the valley of the Nerbudda and in parts of Malwa. Other chiefs failed, and were cut up in the attempt; but Cheetoo succeeded in baffling every effort made to intercept him or overtake him, and effected his object by penetrating through a most difficult country. He suddenly reappeared in Malwa, in the neighbourhood of the ancient city of Dhar, situated among rocks, forests, and the sources of rivers; but his extraordinary march had cost him all his baggage and most of his horses. He was now lost sight of for some time; during which the best of his fellow-chiefs with their durras were extirpated in other parts. At last his lair was discovered, and on the night of the 25th of January, 1818, a strong party of the British came upon him and utterly broke up his band. The hill robbers of Malwa, the Bheels and Grasseas, were encouraged to plunder and destroy the fugitives, and are said to have executed the commission very zealously. Cheetoo, however, escaped Bheels and Grasseas, as he had so often the English, and for a short time wandered and skulked about Malwa with some two hundred followers. When in this state of hopeless misery, he was often advised by some of his followers to surrender to the English and trust to their mercy. He was possessed however by the dreadful idea, that the English would transport him beyond the sea, and this was more hideous to him than death. These followers, who all, one after another, came in and obtained pardon, related, that during their captain's short and miserable sleep at this period, he used continually to murmur, "Kala Pance! Kala Pance!"—"The black Sea! Oh, the black Sea!"

Sir John Malcolm.

At this conjuncture it struck Cheetoo that possibly the Nabob of Bopaul might make terms for him and the remnant of his durra with the English; and rapidly acting on the idea, he suddenly entered the camp of that prince. But when he learned that the nabob could offer or promise nothing beyond a slender personal maintenance in some remote corner of India, he decamped as suddenly as he had come. While he stayed, his horses were constantly saddled, and his men slept with the bridles in their hands, ready to fly instantly. Preparations were making for the purpose of seizing him the very night he went off from the Bopaul camp. Though he got safely off, he was presently pursued by the nabob's people and by parties sent out by Sir John Malcolm. This distressed him so much, that Rajun, one of his most faithful and valuable adherents, left him, and made his submission. Yet, after all this, Cheetoo found his way into the Deccan, and made common cause with the Arabs and chiefs of the Peishwa's routed army, receiving occasional protection from the killadar of the fortress of Aseerghur, a place of great strength, the ancient capital of Candeish, and at this time included among the possessions of Scindiah. His durra was completely destroyed, and nearly all his followers deserted him, but nothing could subdue Cheetoo's spirit, or induce him to surrender. His end, however, approached, and it was tragical and singular. Having joined Apa Saheb, he passed the rainy season of 1818 among the Mahadeo mountains; and upon that Rajah's expulsion by the English, in February, 1819, he accompanied him to the fort of Aseerghur. Being refused admittance, he sought shelter in a neighbouring jungle, and on horseback and alone attempted to penetrate a cover known to be infested by tigers. He was missed for some days, and no one knew what had become of him. His well-known horse was

1817. at last discovered grazing near the margin of the forest, saddled and bridled, and exactly in the state in which it was when Cheetoo had last been seen upon it. A bag of two hundred and fifty rupees was found in the saddle, together with several seal-rings and some letters of Apa Saheb, promising future reward to the great robber. A search was made in the cover for the body; and at no great distance were found clothes clotted with blood, fragments of bones, and, lastly, the Pindarree's head entire, with the features in a state to be recognised. "The chief's mangled remains," says the best historian of his adventures, "were given over to his son for interment; and the miserable fate of one who so shortly before had ridden at the head of 20,000 horse, gave an awful lesson of the uncertainty of fortune, and drew pity even from those who had been the victims of his barbarity when living."

Henry T. Prinsep.
History of the Political and Military Transactions in India.

Journal of Central India.

With Cheetoo ended the last of the Pindarrees, and the spirit which had animated their vast lawless associations. Their name is all that now remains of them, for the sad traces of their devastation have entirely disappeared under re-established order, industry, prosperity, police, and good government. It is now nearly a quarter of a century since that gallant officer, accomplished diplomatist, and able writer, the late Sir John Malcolm, said of them—"There now remains not a spot in India that a Pindarree can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all ruined. Those who espoused their cause have fallen. They were early in the contest shunned like a contagion, and even the timid villagers, whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders had either died, submitted, or been made captives: while their followers, with the exception of a few whom the liberality and consideration of the British government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that population from whose dross they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These freebooters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country, so that they were bound by none of those ties which among many of the communities in India assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times, but as a body the Pindarrees are so effectually destroyed, that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are passed since it spread terror and dismay over all India."

MAHRATTA WARS

The Mahratta wars which were waged by the Marquess of Hastings are chiefly interesting from their having led to these desirable results. In these wars there was very little manœuvring, either on our side or on that of the enemy. The great business of our commanders was to bring the army rapidly up with the foe, and to correctly calculate and provide for the means of so doing. The valour of our troops, native as well as European, their steadiness, rapidity in formation, and their bayonet-points, did the rest. But great was the foresight required, and numerous the difficulties to be overcome, ere an Anglo-Indian army, with its amazing train of camp-followers, could be brought up with alert enemies who were for the most part mounted. After leaving their own frontiers, they had often to march hundreds of miles before they

could come within reach of a tangible enemy. On these marches the followers could never be left far behind. A very large number of attendants was considered indispensable: one man was required for every three bullocks, and many were required for the elephants and camels of the army; every horse in the army had, besides the rider, two attendants, one to clean and take care of him, the other to cut the grass and provide his forage; the palanquin and litter bearers for the sick formed another numerous and useful class; field-officers, including the people who carried or had charge of their tents, baggage, &c., had each about forty attendants; captains had twenty, and subalterns ten servants each: the bazaar people, the merchants, their families, servants, &c., formed another numerous body. Generally, while marching, there were no towns to be depended on for supplies, and the army not only carried with it most of the means of subsistence for several months, but many articles of merchandize. The scene altogether resembled the migration of a nation guarded by troops, rather than the advance of an army to subdue an enemy.

On the first year of this war against the Pindarrees and Mahrattas the army of the Marquess of Hastings was assailed by a new and terrible enemy; this was the Indian Cholera Morbus, the virulence of which appears to have been increased by the crowded state of our camps. The disease first broke out at Jessore, the capital of a district in the southern quarter of Bengal, a populous and unhealthy city in the centre of the Delta of the Ganges, and near the pestiferous Sunderbunds. It began its ravages as the rainy season of 1817 set in, and cut off the majority of those whom it attacked. From Jessore it spread in all directions, showing, as it was thought, a preference for the valleys of rivers. Ascending the valley of the Ganges, it reached the camp of Brigadier-General Hardyman about the beginning of October; but the troops, being then encamped in a dry healthy country, and being but few in number, suffered comparatively little. Continuing its course westward, it fell with extraordinary violence upon the army commanded by Lord Hastings in person, just after his lordship had concluded the treaty with Scindiah. This army, when first seized, was encamped in a low and unhealthy part of Bundelcund, on the banks of the river Sinde, a confluent of the Jumna, which has its source in the mountains of Malwa. The year was one of scarcity, and grain had been collected for the troops, through the camp-followers, with extreme difficulty, and of course of inferior quality. The water of the country, except where it could be obtained from running streams, was indifferent. The time of the year too was that at which the heat of the day is most strongly contrasted with the cold of the night. To all these extraordinary circumstances was super-added the very crowded state of the camp of so large an army. For about ten days that the disease raged with its greatest fury, the whole camp was an hospital. The mortality amounted to about a tenth of the whole number collected there. Europeans and natives, soldiers and camp-followers, were alike affected; but the latter, being generally worse clothed and fed than the fighting men, suffered in a greater proportion. Of the Europeans fewer were seized, but those who took the disease more frequently died, and usually within a few hours. The camp was abandoned, and the army continued for some days to move to the eastward in the hope of finding relief in a better climate; but each day's march many dead and dying were abandoned, and many more fell

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down on the road—so many that it was not possible to furnish the means for carrying them on, although the utmost possible provision had been made by the previous distribution of bullock-carts and elephants for the accommodation of the sick. Nothing was heard along the line of march but groans and shrieks and lamentations; even the healthy were broken in spirit and incapable of exertion; and, for the time, the efficiency of this fine army seemed to be entirely destroyed. Towards the end of November, when the army reached a healthy station at Ereeh, on the right bank of the Betwa river, the epidemic had visibly expended its violence. The camp was, however, still crowded with convalescents, when it marched with its noble commander to take an active part in the war.

During the rage of the epidemic one or two of his servants in attendance sunk suddenly from behind his lordship's chair; and the noble marquess himself, seeing the probability of being attacked by the dreadful disease, gave secret instructions, in case of his dying, to be buried in his tent, lest the enemy should hear of his death and be thereby encouraged to attack his disheartened and crippled troops. The return of health came very opportunely, for the army had been but a very short time at Ereeh when the marquess received intelligence that Scindiah had sent an invitation to the Pindarrees. The Mahratta prince was reported to have promised the robbers that if they would come so near to Gualior as to make his getting to them easy, he would break his recent treaty with the English, and join them with the force which he had at his capital. The Pindarrees in fact were in full march for Gualior, without meeting even a show of resistance from troops of Scindiah stationed on their route, though the co-operation of his army for the extinction of the Pindarrees was an article of the treaty. The movements of these Pindarrees and the suspicious conduct of Scindiah's troops imposed on the marquess the necessity of making a retrograde movement. "We hurried back to the Sinde," says his lordship; "but this time we chose a position nearer to Gualior than that which we had before occupied. We were within thirty miles of the city, and our advanced-guard was sent to occupy the passes through the hills, which run at some distance south of Gualior from the Sinde to the Chumbul. These passes were the only routes by which communication could take place between the Pindarrees and Scindiah; and I was nearer to support my advanced-guard than the Maharajah (Scindiah) was to attack it, could he bring his men to so desperate a stake. The Pindarrees, finding their hopes baffled, and the pass, &c., stopped, attempted to retire; but they had been followed close by our divisions, were surprised, dispersed, and slaughtered in a number of small actions. In short, they disappeared. And thus our objects were completed."

Marquess of Hastings, Report on the Rise and Progress of the Late War, &c.

While the forces under the Marquess of Hastings, and the divisions under Hislop, Malcolm, Marshall, Keir, Adams, and other officers, were chasing the Pindarrees from moor and mountain, valley and jungle, or reducing the forts in Malwa, Brigadier-General Smith, who had been reinforced at Poonah, prepared for an active pursuit of Bajee Rao, the fugitive Peishwa, who had flitted hither and thither like an ignis fatuus. Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, having organized a police and a provisional administration for the city of Poonah, accompanied General Smith's division, which began its march at the end of

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November. Gokla, one of the Peishwa's evil advisers, but bravest officers, attempted to defend a ghaut leading to the high land where the Kistna has its source, and where the Peishwa had found a refuge and a rallying point; but the Mahratta was beaten, and the pass was cleared by the British with great ease. No fighting, but rapid and most wearying marches ensued, the Peishwa's army flying in a sort of zigzag, and the Peishwa himself always keeping in advance of his main body. At last the Mahratta succeeded in getting round Smith's division; and then, passing between Poonah and Seroor, he moved northward as far as Wuttoor, on the road to Nassik. Here he was joined by his long-lost favourite Trimbukjee, who brought with him a considerable reinforcement of horse and foot. Trimbukjee had collected these forces in various directions, but a good part of them appear to have been Pindarrees. But for the good fights made in front of the presidency at Nagpoor, and within the walls of that city, Apa Saheb would have accompanied Trimbukjee with his large army and his desperate Arabs. After he had discovered the direction the Peishwa had taken, and had recruited his own worn-out cattle, General Smith, on the 22nd of September, started again in pursuit. This headlong race to the northward brought Smith close upon the rear of the Mahrattas; but, with the lubricity of eels, they slipped through his fingers, and making a flank movement behind some hills, they turned suddenly to the south, and retraced their steps towards Poonah. Colonel Burr, who commanded in that city, apprehending an attack, solicited the reinforcement of a battalion from Seroor. Captain Francis French Staunton,* of the Bombay establishment, was forthwith detached from Seroor with about 600 sepoys, 300 auxiliary horse, and two six-pounders. The distance was only two short marches. Staunton began his march from Seroor at eight o'clock in the evening of the 31st of December, and at ten the next morning he reached the heights of Corregaum, about half-way to Poonah, when, looking down upon the plain which lay between him and that city, he saw the whole of the Peishwa's army, estimated at 20,000 horse and several thousand foot. His march to Poonah was intercepted, and he himself was in great danger of being cut off. The brave officer did what the circumstances of the case required: he made a dash at the village of Corregaum (which stood on the heights, and which was composed of a number of stone houses with strong stone walls round the gardens), hoping to gain possession of it before it could be obtained by the enemy. But the Mahrattas, or rather the Arabs, who composed the main body of their infantry, were as near to the village as was Captain Staunton; and as he entered at one side and took possession of some of the houses, the Arabs entered at the opposite side and took possession of other houses. A terrible struggle ensued, at first between the Company's troops and the Arabs for the possession of the whole of the village, and then between our handful of men and nearly the whole of the Mahratta army. Unfortunately Captain Swanston, who commanded our 300 auxiliary horse, was wounded early in the day, and his weak squadrons could not show themselves in face of the masses of Mahratta cavalry. The enemy, who had been running too fast to carry artillery with him, brought up only two guns; but if there was an equality in this particular arm, their infantry exceeded ours by

* Subsequently Col. F. F. Staunton, C. B.

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In the course of the 3rd of January, the day on which Captain Staunton got back to Seroor, Brigadier-General Smith reached the village of Corre-gaum with his strong division. The Peishwa and his Mahrattas fled back to the table-land near the sources of the Kistna, from which they had descended. General Smith followed them closely, and Brigadier-General Pritzler, with another division, was moving from another point to intercept them. The Mahrattas continued to turn and twist like eels, and though Pritzler trod upon their tail more than once, and cut off part of it, they could not be so overtaken as to be brought to a general action, or even to a stand. They were very nearly caught in the neighbourhood of Satara, on the 28th of January; but they escaped by a ghaut, with the loss of part of their rear-guard. A small detachment under Colonel Boles cannonaded them out of another ghaut, which they were attempting to thread; but they only changed their line of march. The troops were exhausted by this harassing pursuit, which seemed to produce no visible advantage. Mountstuart Elphinstone had the merit of recommending a better plan of operations. This was to storm the many strong places in the country, to deprive the Peishwa of the means of subsistence, to reduce Satara, which was still the nominal capital of the Mahratta empire, and to reinstate the Satara family in an independent sovereignty. The fortress of Satara surrendered to Brigadier-General Smith, on the 10th of February, the day on which he first appeared before it. Some other places were in process of reduction when the Peishwa made certain rash movements which enabled General Smith to fall upon him at Ashtee, on the 20th of February, with the 2nd and 7th regiments of Madras light cavalry, and two squadrons of his Majesty's 22nd dragoons. Bajee Rao, the dastardly Peishwa, deserted his palanquin and his army, mounting a horse, and galloping away as soon as the battle began; but Gokla, his general, seeing that he must either fight or lose the baggage and nearly every thing else, made a bold stand, outflanking Smith's small force, and at one moment threatening it in the rear. But the British dragoons charged his *Gole*,* and killed him in the charge. The death of Gokla left the Mahrattas without a head. From this moment all was confusion and panic, each mass of cavalry breaking as our dragoons approached it. Some faint resistance was attempted in the camp; but our dragoons dashed in, and made good booty. Twelve elephants and fifty-seven camels formed part of this prize. General Smith was slightly wounded on the head, and Lieutenant Warrand, of the 22nd dragoons, was wounded by Gokla, who fought fiercely in the *melée*, and wounded several of our men before he fell; but no one was killed on our side, and only 17 or 18 of the soldiers were wounded.

The remnant of the Peishwa's army fled towards the north, being daily thinned by desertion. Brigadier-General Pritzler, General Monro, Colonels Prother and Deacon, reduced all the forts that remained; the Mahratta flag was fast disappearing, and so were the hopes of the Mahratta chiefs. Our divisions and detachments in the field, in almost all parts of India, were too numerous and too well posted to allow of any junction being effected between the Peishwa and the forces of any of our other enemies.

* A mass of Mahratta cavalry.

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After the battle of Ashtee, Brigadier-General Smith repaired to Satara, in order to assist Mr. Elphinstone in setting up the Rajah. In this way the Peishwa gained a few days' respite, during which he continued to press to the north-west, with the design of throwing himself into the territories of the Nizam of the Deccan, which he hoped to find ill furnished with troops. But turning back from Satara, and making a short halt at Seroor, Smith renewed his pursuit of the Peishwa on the 10th of March. Brigadier-General Doveton, with his division, moved in another direction in the expectation of intercepting the Peishwa. Nevertheless the Mahratta traversed the Nizam's dominions from west to east, and appeared on the banks of the Werda on the 1st of April. But as his van was crossing that river with the intention of marching upon Nagpoor, it was met and driven back by a small detachment under Colonel Scott. The Peishwa then tried to cross the river at another point, but here he was met by Colonel Adams, and was informed by his scouts that General Doveton was getting close upon him. Without waiting the arrival of Doveton, Adams followed the Mahrattas, came up with them near Soonee, and with only one regiment of native cavalry and some horse artillery, gave them a signal overthrow. The enemy fled through the jungles, leaving behind them five guns, the Peishwa's much-sunken treasure, three elephants, and 200 camels. This time Bajee Rao had a very narrow escape; for, though he began to run as soon as his people began to fight, a palanquin in which he had just been riding was taken, and was found to be perforated by a shot. More than 1000 of his Mahrattas remained dead on the field. They were knocked down by our horse artillery or by our cavalry in their flight. They can scarcely have stood anywhere, for Colonel Adams's total loss was only two wounded. General Doveton was near enough to hear the firing of Adams's guns; but it was found necessary to halt our troops in order to wait for supplies; and then mistakes were committed as to the direction in which the pursuit ought to be continued. Nor was it easy to avoid these errors, for the Peishwa's army split up into various detachments, and each took a route of its own. Two-thirds of his people quitted his standard altogether, and were only anxious to reach their homes as speedily as might be. Bajee Rao's whole object now was to get back to the north-east; but here he found his progress stopped by General Sir Thomas Hislop, who was returning from Malwa to the Deccan. On his way Sir Thomas had resorted to a measure of unusual severity. The fort of Talnere or Thalnir, situated on the north bank, and commanding a ford over the river Taptee, was one of the places ceded to the English by Holkar under the late treaty. Sir Thomas had in his possession Holkar's own orders for the quiet surrender of the place; yet a fire was opened upon his troops from the fort. The Mahratta killadar, or commandant, was warned that if he continued to resist the order of his master he would be dealt with as a rebel: without heeding the message, the killadar continued to fire. Upon this Sir Thomas Hislop occupied the Pettah, or open town, and turned his artillery upon the fort. The gate of the fort was blown open by two six-pounders. The flank companies of the Royal Scots and of the Company's European regiment rushed in, and came to the second gate, which was found open. At the third gate they were met by the killadar, who came out by the wicket and surrendered to Colonel Conway. The third and fourth gates were

then opened, and the storming party advanced to the fifth, which led into the body of the place. This was found shut, but part of the garrison within demanded terms, and expressed their dissatisfaction at the gate's being closed. After a very short parley, in which they were summoned to surrender at discretion, the wicket gate was opened from within, and Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, Major Gordon, Captain MacGregor, and Lieutenants Chauvel and MacGregor entered, and were followed by ten or twelve grenadiers. They were scarcely within the wicket, when some wild Arabs, who formed part of the garrison, fell upon them with swords, spears, and knives. Major Gordon and Captain MacGregor were killed forthwith; Lieutenant-Colonel Murray was wounded in several places, cut down, and disabled; the two lieutenants were wounded and cut down also, and all the grenadiers were either killed or wounded. But the rest of our storming-party soon rushed through the wicket, drove off the murderous Arabs, and in the end slaughtered every man that was in the fort. Between Arabs, Patans, and Mahrattas, 300 men were sacrificed to the vengeance of our infuriated soldiery. On the next morning Sir Thomas Hislop had the killadar hanged on one of the bastions, on the twofold charge of rebellion and treachery. It was doubted whether the killadar had ordered, or was privy to, the onslaught of the Arabs; it was doubted (but we think unreasonably) whether the Arabs understood that the killadar had surrendered, and that the Mahrattas had agreed to submit—and the conduct of Sir Thomas Hislop, in ordering the execution of the killadar, was severely censured in several quarters; but the example was useful, and upon knowing that the commandant of Talnere had been executed, the killadars of the much stronger forts of Gaulnah, Chandore, and other places which Holkar had ceded, submitted upon summons, or as soon as they were shown Holkar's orders to admit the English.

Bajee Rao had been running hither and thither for more than six months, but his race was now well nigh finished. North, south, east, and west, his road was cut off, and forces were moving round him from the intermediate points of the compass. Finding himself so sorely pressed, he attempted again to pass into Malwa; but Sir John Malcolm, who was himself at Mow, a town or large cantonment in the Malwa province, had so stationed some forces under Lieutenant-Colonels Russel and Corsellis as to render this movement impracticable. On the evening of the 25th of May Sir John Malcolm learned that a vakeel from the Peishwa had arrived at a place on the Nerbudda river, about forty miles from Mow. Malcolm immediately moved towards that place, and took his troops with him. On the 27th of May he met the vakeel or ambassador, who assured him that the Peishwa was determined to come to him, and to trust to his friendship and generosity. Sir John, being informed of the plan of disposing of the Peishwa which had been framed by the Marquess of Hastings and Mr. Elphinstone, stated the conditions, and sent the vakeel back to his master, who was occupying a good position on a hill. The Peishwa remained irresolute for several days, during which the division of General Doveton and other troops got close into his neighbourhood. At last, on the evening of the 1st of June, he came down to a village in the plain, and met Sir John Malcolm. The Mahratta did not come alone, he had an escort 2500 strong, and he brought his family with him. Malcolm, who had come to the

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Colonel Valentine Blacker, *Memoir of the Operations of the British Army in India, &c.* Lieutenant Edward Lake, *Journals of the Sieges of the Madras Army, &c. in the years 1817-19, &c.*

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appointed place with only a thin attendance, repeated the conditions, and demanded the immediate surrender of Trimbukjee. Bajee Rao declared that it was not in his power to give up Trimbukjee, that Trimbukjee had an army and camp of his own, that he was stronger than he was. "Then," said Malcolm, "I will attack him forthwith." "Success attend you!" replied the Peishwa. The Mahratta prince further declared that he had been involved in a war without meaning it; that he was treated as an enemy by the English, who had supported his family for two generations; that he was now in a lamentable situation, but believed that he still had a real friend in Sir John Malcolm. He was told that he ought either to throw himself at once on the magnanimity of the British Government, or prepare for further resistance. "How can I resist now?" said the Mahratta; "I am surrounded." Malcolm replied that this was quite true, but that still he might escape if he preferred becoming a freebooter and wanderer to accepting the liberal provisions which the English were ready to give him. Bajee Rao protested that Malcolm was his friend, his only friend, and that he would never leave him, but trust entirely to his good offices. Nevertheless, the Peishwa, on breaking up the conference, asked for a little delay, and in retiring to the ghaut from which he had descended, he took care to guard his rear and flanks with his resolute Arab infantry, and to show the muzzles of his guns over the rocks; and upon reaching his camp he sent trusty messengers to the camp of Trimbukjee to tell that favourite to beware of Malcolm. It was, however, utterly impossible for him to procrastinate very long, for he was completely hemmed in, and his supplies of provisions were failing. He informed Sir John Malcolm that he would go to his camp, and conclude the treaty as proposed to him on the morning of the 3rd of June. When that morning came he tried one faint shuffle more. It was an inauspicious day, he had some religious ceremonies to perform; would not his dear friend Malcolm wait till to-morrow? Malcolm gave him to understand that he would not wait another hour; and this, with the not very distant firing of some English guns on one of his flanks or in his rear, had the effect of removing all further hesitation. At about 11 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd he came down to Sir John Malcolm's camp, and delivered himself up, with his family. Malcolm, like nearly all his distinguished Indian contemporaries, was a man of a large and generous heart: none knew better than he the demerits and the helplessness of the fallen enemy now before him, yet he agreed that the Peishwa's allowance should not be less than eight lacs of rupees per annum, and that a most liberal provision should be made for his courtiers, Brahmins, temples, &c. The supreme government at Calcutta thought that Sir John had granted too much, but as it was done they confirmed the grants. Bajee Rao renounced for ever the dignity of Peishwa, or supreme chief of the Mahrattas, together with all his claims of sovereignty. If Trimbukjee had not been secured in an English prison, the case might have been different; but as that turbulent felon was caught, after another hard run for it, the ex-Peishwa quietly resigned himself to a life of luxury and ease, spending his 80,000*l.* a year, not in raising troops or exciting combinations against the Company, but in mere sensual indulgences. He was very anxious to have his residence fixed at Poonah; but to this the governor-general objected strongly, and for very evident reasons. To Benares, which

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was proposed to him as a suitable residence, he expressed a rooted aversion. He would have preferred Mutra, but as that was a frontier station it was refused. The village of Betoor or Brimatwar, on the Ganges, near Cawnpoor, was finally fixed upon for his residence. His progress through Rajpootana and the Doab to the place of his exile excited hardly any sensation among the people. When settled at Betoor, he bathed daily in the holy water of the Ganges, indulged in the highest living of a Brahmin, maintained three expensive sets of dancing-girls, and surrounded himself with low buffoons and sycophants. The rallying-point of the Mahratta confederacy was thus broken up, and if it was not quite so easy to change the character of the Mahratta people, and to introduce peaceful industrious habits among them—if the unchanged character of that people prognosticated future troubles in India—still their power of doing mischief was from this time vastly reduced. To the restored family of the Rajah of Satara, whose hereditary claim to the sovereignty of the country, and to the dignity of Peishwa, was held to be much better than that of Bajee Rao, only a very limited territory was allotted upon his yielding all claim or pretension to be Peishwa; a dignity wisely and for ever abrogated. The Satara dominions occupy a surface of about 11,000 square miles, being bounded on the west by the Western Ghaut mountains, on the south by the Warna and Krishna, on the north by the Neera and Beema rivers, and on the east by the frontier of the Nizam's dominions. The total net revenues amounted to 15,600,000 rupees; but out of this sum three laes per annum were reserved for chiefs who had become subjects of the Company, and three laes more were alienated. The management of the territories, and the superintendence of the Rajah of Satara's affairs, were assigned to Captain Grant until the country should become tranquillized. Many of the hill-forts, which had been what the worst of our baronial castles were in the early part of the twelfth century (dens of thieves, cut-throats, and violators), were dismantled; and others, cleared of their occupants, were allowed to go to ruin. In 1821, when the young Rajah attained the age of twenty-one, he was invested with the administration of his dominions, which were then tranquil and prosperous.

Upon the conclusion of the treaty with Sir John Malcolm, all that remained of the ex-Peishwa's army quietly broke up and dispersed. Not even Trimbukjee could keep a force together. This chief, knowing that the English would condemn him to imprisonment for life, fled with a few followers to the neighbourhood of Nassuck, a large town and place of pilgrimage on the Godavery, principally inhabited by Brahmins. The murderer had ever shown a preference for these holy places, and he probably hoped to escape notice among the crowds of Hindu pilgrims that were constantly repairing to the temples of Nassuck. Here, in fact, he remained concealed for some time, in spite of the active search making for him. At last, Captain Swanston, one of the heroes of Corregau, being detached by Mr. Elphinstone from a distant station, succeeded, after a march of fifty miles in sixteen hours, in discovering the murderer's hiding-place, and in surrounding the house. When the gates were forced, Trimbukjee was reclining on a cot; he fled to the upper part of the house, and concealed himself under some straw. He was presently dragged from his cover: he offered no resistance, and was sent under a good guard to Tannah, the prison from which he had escaped through the ingenious aid of the Mah-

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ratta groom and songster. After a short time he was carried to Calcutta, and put into the cage in Fort William which had previously been occupied by Vizier Ali, but he was very soon conveyed to the rock of Chunar near Benares.

Edward Lake,
Lieutenant of
Madras Engineers.
'Journals of the
Sieges of the
Madras Army.'

The capture of the fortress of Aseerghur was the last operation of the Pindarree and Mahratta war: a war which had witnessed an unprecedented number of sieges, an unprecedented number and complexity of movements, and some of the most remarkable forced marches that were ever made in any country. "THIRTY hill-fortresses, each of which might have defied the whole Anglo-Indian army, fell in the course of a few weeks; and this vast Mahratta empire, which had overshadowed the East, and before which the star of the Mogul had become pale, was annihilated."

After the siege of Aseerghur the armies of the three presidencies returned to their several stations and cantonments in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay; and the regions which had been crossed and recrossed, and traversed in all directions by immense hosts of combatants, by British and native troops, Peishwa Mahrattas, Holkar Mahrattas, Nagpoor Mahrattas, Pindarrees, Patans, Arabs, Gonds, and others, became quiet as a bay of the ocean after a storm; quieter and happier than they had been for many ages. In the territories assumed by the Company, or taken under its immediate protection, able men were left by the Marquess of Hastings to improve this tranquillity, to establish permanently the reign of peace and law, and to better the condition of all the native inhabitants. For more than thirty preceding years the province of Malwa and the whole of Central India had been oppressed, pillaged, and laid waste, by the Pindarrees, by the Mahrattas of all tribes, by the Rajpoot princes, and by the Puars: these different powers acted sometimes in combination, but more frequently in opposition to one another: they were all equally cruel and rapacious in the moment of success and conquest, and about equally incapable of giving that stability to their conquests which would have given relief to the poor oppressed people whose greatest calamity was the frequent change of masters. To Sir John Malcolm, who had assisted so potentially in subduing the sanguinary anarchists, and expelling the Pindarrees, was assigned the equally difficult duty of restoring order and repairing the frightful mischiefs which had been committed in so long a series of years. He was appointed by the Marquess of Hastings to the military and political command of Malwa, which had perhaps suffered more than any other part of India. Hundreds upon hundreds of its villages were deserted and roofless; the ferocious tigers of the jungles literally usurped the country, and fought with the returning inhabitants for their fields. In the state of Holkar alone, of 3701 villages only 2038 were inhabited; 1663 were "without lamp"—were wholly deserted. Under the wise rule established by Malcolm, more than two-thirds of these deserted villages were restored and repeopled before the end of 1820; and in less than five years from the time our army first occupied the country, Sir John could boast with an honourable pride, and with perfect correctness, that Malwa and the rest of central India were tranquil and contented, and rapidly advancing in population and prosperity. "It may be asserted that history affords few examples where a change in the political condition of a country has been attended with such an aggregate of increased happiness to

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its inhabitants, as that which was effected within four years in Central India; and it is pleasing to think that, with the exception of suppressing a few Bheel robbers, peace was restored, and has hitherto been maintained, without one musket being fired." Accustomed to the extremities of military violence, the inhabitants of the country, on the English first entering, betrayed feelings of doubt and alarm. These were by some mistaken for dislike to our supremacy; but they arose only out of fear of insult or outrage, and they were speedily removed by the strict discipline preserved by our troops, whether stationary or marching. In a very short time, wherever troops or individuals moved they were received with cordiality, as the friends and protectors of the people. To organize the country honourable and intelligent British officers were sent into every part of it. "The result has been fortunate beyond anticipation. These agents, within their respective circles, have not only, by their direct intercourse with all classes, established great influence, but spread a knowledge of our character and intentions, which has increased respect and confidence; and they have in almost all cases succeeded, by the arbitration of differences, and the settlement of local disputes, *in preserving the peace of the country without troops*. The most exact observance of certain principles is required from these officers, and their line is very carefully and distinctly prescribed. The object has been to escape every interference with the internal administration of the country, beyond what the preservation of the public peace demanded." In other parts of India the change was equally beneficial—the blessings derived from the conquest of the Mahrattas and the extirpation of the Pindarrees were equally apparent. As Bishop Heber was travelling through the country in 1824, he overheard a conversation among some villagers who were comparing the present peaceable times with those in which "Ameer Khan and Bappoo Scindiah came up with their horsemen and spoiled all the land, and smote all the people, and burned the cities through Mewar and Marwar, till thou comest unto the salt wilderness." He also heard them say that corn had been gradually getting cheaper, and notwithstanding a late unfavourable season, was still not so dear as it used to be in the years of trouble. The kind and warm-hearted prelate adds, "When such have been the effects of British supremacy, who will refuse to pray for the continuance of our Empire?"

The reputation of the British in India has never stood higher than at the conclusion of the Pindarree and Mahratta war; and during the four remaining years of Lord Hastings's government the face of Central India was changed to an extent which would have appeared almost incredible to any one who had not contemplated upon the spot the rapid progress of the change, and studied the causes by which it was produced. No war had begun in a higher motive, or had ended in a more positive good to mankind. "The campaign which had just terminated," says Malcolm, "was not an attack upon a state, or upon a body of men, but upon a system. It was order contending against anarchy; and the first triumph was so complete, that there ceased, almost from the moment, to be any who cherished hopes of the contest being either prolonged or revived: the victory gained was slight, comparatively speaking, over armies, to what it was over mind. The universal distress, which a series of revolutions must ever generate, had gone its circle

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and reached all ranks and classes. The most barbarous of those who subsisted on plunder had found that a condition of continued uncertainty and alarm could not be one of enjoyment. The princes, chiefs, and inhabitants of the country had neither national feelings, confidence in each other, nor any one principle of union. When, therefore, the English Government, too strong to be resisted, proclaimed every district to be the right of its proprietor, on condition of his proving himself the friend of peace and good order; and when men found that the choice between such a course, and that of continuing the promoters of anarchy, was an option between its friendship or hostility, all concurred in submission. There appeared in a few a difficulty to conquer habits, but in none a spirit of opposition. The desolated state of the country was favourable to the change, for it presented an ample field for the revival of industry in peaceful occupations; but the paramount influence which the results of the war gave to the British Government over several of the native states, was the principal cause of that peace and prosperity which ensued. Our officers were enabled to give shape and direction to the efforts of these states which became an example to others: and a tone of improvement was given to every province of Central India."

The inhabitants of the wild provinces subject to Scindiah started into prosperity as soon as his numerous, restless, and marauding army was broken up. And Scindiah himself was as great a gainer as his subjects; for this army, and the insolent rapacious chieftains who raised and commanded it, in reality oppressed him as well as the people, and rarely left him at liberty to use his own judgment, or act according to his own will. The most dangerous of these chieftains were now destroyed; and, aided by the presence of English armies, by the universal discouragement which had fallen upon the Mahrattas, and by the confirmed conviction that their old trade of war had become an unprofitable trade, Scindiah was enabled to disband immense corps commanded by insubordinate chiefs, and to reduce his army to 13,000 regular infantry, and 9,000 horse. The saving in actual expenditure, from reductions alone, was estimated at twenty lacs of rupees per annum. At the same time the revenues were raised forty per cent. by the restoration of tranquillity and order. Even the disbanded soldiers returned to their native districts, and to their former occupation, as cultivators of the soil. The lamp had been altogether extinguished in only a few villages in Scindiah's dominions, but many of these villages had been reduced to four or five families. The voids were rapidly filled up. In 1817 there was not one district belonging to Scindiah that was not more or less in a disturbed state; in 1821 there existed not one enemy to the public peace in any of these districts. All the districts which had been wrested from this chief by the Pindarrees were restored to him: the loss of the fortress of Aseerghur was nearly all he lost by the war. In the dominions of Holkar, where the anarchy and devastation had been greater, the change to good was the more striking. Our victory at Maheidpoor had scattered for ever the overgrown army of this state; those battalions were never re-embodied, and 200 men to guard the palace were all the infantry left in the service of this Mahratta dynasty. Three thousand obedient cavalry were retained for the police of the country, together with a small park of artillery. In less than four years the revenues of the state were nearly quadrupled; and the expenses

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of collection were brought down from forty to fifteen per cent. The rapid restoration of the roofless and deserted villages has been mentioned. The increase of population in the towns was surprising. Within the short space of three years, Indore, a city in the province of Malwa, the capital of the Holkar family, was changed from a desolate town to a flourishing capital, containing eighty or a hundred thousand inhabitants; for not only did those families return which had fled in the troublous times, but the inhabitants of other towns and districts migrated in large numbers, and settled in Indore. The young prince, who was secured on the musnud by British power, abandoned the custom of his predecessors of always residing in camp, and fixed his residence in this thriving capital. Other states and territories participated in these advantages. The Grasseas, the Sondwarrees, the Gonds, as well as the Bheels and other hereditary and professional robbers, were rapidly suppressed. When the British armies first entered Central India, and even in 1818, the country along the banks of the Nerbudda, and in the Vindhya mountains, which stretch from the province of Bahar to Cape Comorin, was not safe for even troops to pass; and till the end of the same year, when a British cantonment was established at Mow, the robbers continued their depredations. All these bands were repressed, and the most vicious and depraved among them were gradually made sensible of the blessings attending a better course of life. From the territories of Bopaul to those of Guzerat, along the right bank of the Nerbudda, and from Hindia to the country of Burwannee, on the left bank of that river, a spirit of industry and improvement was introduced. New villages rose everywhere, and forests which had long been deemed impenetrable were fast cleared, on account of the profit derived from the timber required to rebuild villages, towns, cities. Between Jaum and Mandoo the Bheels began to cultivate every spot, and their hamlets rose with a rapidity that promised an early and complete change in the whole face of that district, and in the manners of its inhabitants. Bishop Heber thought that he discovered a hankering among the "hill people" after their old modes of life, and that there were many of the Bheels who still sighed after their late anarchy, and exclaimed, amid the comforts of a peaceable government,

Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India.*

" Give us our wildness and our woods,
Our huts and caves again."

An English party travelling from Mow observed some Bheels looking earnestly at a large drove of bullocks which were drinking at a ford. Upon being asked whether those oxen belonged to him, one of the Bheels replied, "No; but a good part of them would have been ours by this time, if it were not for you English, who will let nobody thrive but yourselves!" But in proportion as an efficient police was established, and roads (those grand means of civilization) were opened through the country, the wild mountain Bheels were kept in check, and gradually brought within the pale of law and civilized life. But for the advance of British armies into Central India, these very Bheels would soon have attracted notice as a substantive power, for they had already acquired an ascendancy over several petty native states, and neither Mahrattas nor Patans, neither Arabs nor any other kind of force at the disposal of the native potentates of Central India, would have ventured to attack them in their moun-

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tains, where no booty was to be expected, where nothing was to be got but hard blows.

Sir John Malcolm completely succeeded in clearing the country of Arabs and Meckranees, a desperate set of adventurers from Meckran, in Persia, who, in many instances, had made themselves perfectly independent of the native Indian chiefs whom they pretended to serve; and all the petty chieftains were warned that to retain any of these desperadoes as mercenaries, or to attempt to bring any of them back to the country, would be considered as equivalent to a declaration of hostility against the British Government. All other classes of mercenaries, or of ruffians, who looked only to sword and spear for their support were dismissed. Never was the reign of terror and anarchy more complete than in 1817. No contrast can be greater than what was presented in 1821. The natives were happier then than afterwards; for the recollection of the dangers and miseries they had recently endured increased the enjoyment of present security and good government. "Take it all in all," continues Malcolm, speaking of the period of 1821, "there never was a country where the industrious classes of the population were better pleased with their condition than they now are; nor is this feeling much checked by the moody turbulence of the military classes, who have been deprived of their occupation. Almost all those who were actually natives of the country have been, in one way or other, considered; while a great proportion of the foreign mercenaries, who constituted the chief part of the disbanded armies, have been compelled to leave it; nor will these mercenaries ever return to disturb its peace, while the measures and principles by which the salutary change has been effected are preserved and supported."

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At Poonah, and generally in the dominions of the ex-Peishwa, Bajee Rao, changes and reforms equally salutary were introduced, principally through the management of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, who had the genius of a true legislator, and all the generous sympathies of a philanthropist. By the conquest of the Poonah territory, the British dominion and possessions were extended along the western coast from the northern boundary of the small province of Goa to the mouths of the Taptee; and inland to the long-established western frontier of the Nizam, from the junction of the Wurdah and Toombudra to the junction of the Wagoor and Taptee. Such places in Candeish belonging to the Holkar Mahrattas as fell within these bounds were ceded to the British by the treaty of Mundissoor, which Sir John Malcolm had concluded after the splendid victory at Maheidpoor. Some other territories south of the Sautpoora range of hills were also yielded. By exchanges with the Guicowar Rajah and by arrangements with some minor princes a continuous, uninterrupted dominion was obtained from Bombay to Calcutta and from Madras to Bombay. The former Mahratta war having been attended with the similar advantage of continuous dominion between Madras and Calcutta, the communication between the three presidencies might now be considered as complete.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE death of the Princess Charlotte took place on the 6th of November, 1817; Parliament was opened by Commission on the 27th of January following. It was the sixth and probably the last session of the Fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom. The prospect of being speedily sent back to their constituents was not so generally alarming to members in those days as it has since become; still, in ordinary circumstances, a good many votes were apt to be affected by it, and the last session of the steadiest parliament, when it was certain or likely that a dissolution was at hand, was wont to be distinguished by some little refractoriness, showing itself both in a slight decline of the ministerial majorities and in the increasing number of popular motions, which were for the most part more favourably received than usual, as well as more pertinaciously urged.

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MEETING OF PARLIAMENT; 27th Jan

The Prince Regent's Speech, which was read by the Lord Chancellor, after noticing in the customary terms the continuance of his Majesty's indisposition, proceeded to advert, at somewhat greater length, but in a phraseology hardly less dry and formal, to the death of the Princess. His Royal Highness, it was declared, had been soothed and consoled by the assurances he had received from all classes, both of their just sense of the loss they had sustained, and of their sympathy with his parental sorrow; and, amidst his own sufferings, he had not been unmindful of the effect which the sad event might have on the interests and prospects of the kingdom. Little cordiality, it was well known, had for a long time subsisted between the father and daughter; the natural inclination which the latter had evinced to take part with her mother had estranged and alienated them; and, if the Princess had lived much longer, there would probably have been seen the worst example that had yet been exhibited of the dissension and mutual hatred that had uniformly divided the wearer of the crown and the heir apparent since the accession of the present family, and the internecine war between husband and wife that soon after broke out would have been rendered still more deplorable and revolting by their child being in all probability involved in it as an active combatant. The premature death of the Princess Charlotte at least saved herself and all parties that unhappiness. It could not fail, nevertheless, to be keenly felt by her father. Even if he had been a hard-hearted man, which he was not, but only a luxurious and selfish one, he must have been stunned by such a blow. His pride and sense of personal importance, if nothing else, must have been severely wounded by it. His hope of being the father of a line of kings was gone; he was become the last of his race; his blood would flow in the veins of no future occupant of his throne; no successor in a distant age would look

PRINCE REGENT'S SPEECH.

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back upon him as a progenitor ; his history would end with his own life. All this, however, more calmly viewed, would be found to resolve itself into his merely finding himself in a new position, different from, but not in reality perhaps worse than, the one he had lost. Accordingly, it does not appear that his grief long retained the bitterness and prostration with which it was at first accompanied. He was so ill for a short time that his life was considered to be in danger, and was only saved by copious bleeding ; but in little more than three months he had so far recovered both his health and spirits, as to be able at a dinner given by the Prussian ambassador to entertain the company with a song.

The sequel of the Speech was all congratulatory. It referred to the improvement which had taken place in the course of the preceding year in almost every branch of domestic history—to the improved state of public credit—to the progressive improvement of the revenue in its most important branches ; mentioned the treaties that had been concluded with Spain and Portugal with a view to the abolition of the Slave Trade ; and concluded by recommending to the attention of Parliament the deficiency which had so long existed in the number of places of public worship belonging to the Established Church, when compared with the increased and increasing population of the country. The important change which had taken place in the economical condition of the country, it was observed, “ could not fail to withdraw from the disaffected the principal means of which they had availed themselves for the purpose of fomenting a spirit of discontent, which unhappily led to acts of insurrection and treason ; ” “ and his Royal Highness,” it was added, “ entertains the most confident expectation, that the state of peace and tranquillity, to which the country is now restored, will be maintained, against all attempts to disturb it, by the persevering vigilance of the magistracy, and by the loyalty and good sense of the people.” Thus did the Government flatter itself that its troubles were over, and that the year 1817, in taking its departure, had carried its evil spirit along with it.

Perhaps, however, this apparent confidence may have been partly assumed by Ministers, with a view to the defence of their own proceedings in coping with the late attempts of the disaffected. The best case they could make out for themselves would be to show that the measures they had adopted had been successful in putting down or keeping down disturbance, and that all the dangers against which the extraordinary powers entrusted to them had been intended to provide were now at an end. On the subject of these extraordinary powers, their cessation or their continuance, the Speech said not a word. But as soon as it was read, and before the Address in answer had been moved, the Opposition in both Houses demanded the instant repeal of the Act of last session suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. On this, Ministers announced that it was their intention to present a Bill for that purpose on the following day, and to propose the suspension of the Standing Orders, as had been done in the case of the Act to be repealed, that it might pass without delay. The Bill was accordingly passed through the Lords on the 28th, and through the Commons on the 29th.

THE ADDRESS.

No amendment was moved to the Address ; but it gave rise to some debate in both Houses. Lord Lansdowne denied that the recent trials had furnished

evidence of the existence of any such conspiracy, or general disposition to insurrection throughout the kingdom, as had been assumed by Ministers. "In the trials at Derby, where it was the business and the particular object of the Attorney-General to prove that the discontented there had a correspondence with others in different quarters; he had completely failed. He could not prove that in any part of the country there had been the slightest connexion with these conspirators. This terrible conspiracy, too, was suppressed without the slightest difficulty by eighteen dragoons." His lordship admitted that the Derby conspirators had been very properly brought to trial and justly convicted; but this, he said, was the only thing Ministers had to bring forward as an apology for their measures. Still, he contended, "it was not the suspension of the Habeas Corpus that put down the insurrection, or the conspiracy, whichever it might be called; it had been extinguished by the due administration of the law—by apprehending and bringing the persons accused to trial; and the same law could have been applied with equal efficiency, though the Habeas Corpus Act had remained in force." He maintained farther, that there was no proof that the conspiracy had been at all of a political character, or hostile to the institutions of the country. "The whole disturbance sprung from partial discontent, with which the great body of the population of the place where it broke out were untainted. Even in the very villages through which the insurgents passed, the people ran away from them; and in no part of the country was there any trace to be found of the existence of a conspiracy to alter the King's Government." In the Commons, Sir Samuel Romilly, as has been noticed in a previous page, went still farther. There could be no doubt, he observed, that the persons who were convicted at Derby, whether guilty of treason or not, were guilty of a capital crime; "Brandreth had committed a murder, and those who aided and abetted it were in law equally guilty." But, he went on, "in his conscience he believed, from the information he had received, that the whole of that insurrection was the work of the persons sent by the Government—not indeed for the specific purpose of fomenting disaffection—but as emissaries of sedition from clubs that had never existed." If these words be correctly reported, Sir Samuel, while acquitting Ministers of designedly getting up or attempting to get up an insurrection, would appear to have charged them with being cognizant of the false pretences with which Oliver, and the other spies employed by them, are supposed to have deluded and ensnared their victims—to have concerted with those dangerous agents the fable of the metropolitan clubs of which they gave themselves out as the emissaries. This, however, as we have already observed, is certainly not for a moment to be believed, nor probably is it now a notion entertained by any body. The Ministers were likely enough both to have taken an exaggerated view of the extent and object of whatever tendency to disturbance existed, and to be willing to make the case appear to be, or to have been, as bad as possible; but there are no facts or probabilities which entitle us to suppose that they resorted, or were capable of resorting, to positive trickery and falsehood, even in order to get at the secret counsels of parties whom they might believe to harbour guilty designs. Their indiscretion and culpability consisted in the recklessness with which they let loose such miscreants as Oliver among the people, without taking sufficient, or

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See ante, p. 134.

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apparently any, precautions to protect either themselves or others from being deceived and misled by their arts and machinations.

Mr. Ward, writing to his friend Dr. Copleston from Vienna on the 14th of February, after mentioning that he had just seen in the German papers some meagre extracts from the proceedings at the opening of Parliament, comments as follows on the political condition and prospects of the country:—"As fair a promise of an uninteresting session as a man desirous of staying abroad can wish. The exaggerated lamentation for the poor Princess could not but be, from its obvious purport, offensive to the other branches of the Royal Family; and in the Speech which the minister has composed for the Prince Regent, I think I distinguish somewhat of that feeling which it was calculated to excite. The mention of her is rather dry—sulky rather than sad. The country seems reviving. I have excellent accounts from Staffordshire. At one moment the iron trade was as brisk as ever, but since it has a little gone off; no distress, however." Afterwards, having noticed the recent decease of George Rose, and the appointment of Mr. F. Robinson (the present Earl of Ripon)—"a most amiable, gentlemanlike man"—as his successor in the office of Treasurer of the Navy, he adds—"But this is one of those rare periods of tranquillity and prosperity, when the efficient members of the Government may indulge themselves in appointing whom they please to what they please. Time was when the odds were ten to one against them: luckily for the country, as well as for themselves, they have won the game, and they are now enjoying themselves in spending the stakes." And this was probably the general opinion. Mr. Wyndham Quin, the seconder of the Address in the Commons, gave in his speech a picture of the national prosperity which was almost without a shade. "The country," he said, "feels an increased circulation in every artery, in every channel of its commerce. Last year the fires were extinguished in most of the iron works; now they are in full activity, and the price of iron has risen from eight or nine to about fourteen pounds a ton. The demand for linen, the staple of the north of Ireland, is unprecedented both as to quantity and price. The funds are now 80, last year about 63. Money is most abundant, and, when lent at mortgage on good security, lowering in rate of interest, and to be had at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; at the same time that sales of land are effected at better prices than last year." Gold, too, the orator declared, had reappeared; though, he added, the little request in which it was held seemed to evince that a belief in the stability of our financial system was universal. Wages had advanced; employment was plentiful; imports and exports had increased; the revenue had improved; and confidence, finally, had returned among all classes and descriptions of men.

The painter may have been rather profuse of his sunshine; but, with due allowance for the occasion, this was not perhaps a very extravagant representation of the outside aspect of things. Now let us look a little deeper, and endeavour to ascertain what was the real state of the case.

First, in regard to the economical condition of the country. A great fall had taken place in the price of grain. The *Gazette* average for wheat at the end of June, 1817, had been 111s. 6d.; by the end of September the price in Mark Lane had declined to 74s. 4d. Importation ceased in November. But

prices very soon began to rise again. "As the weather," Mr. Tooke writes, "during the greater part of the harvesting, though favourable in the main, was calm and foggy, with only short intervals in the day of brilliant sunshine, and as the rains again set in before the harvest was fully completed, the samples of new wheat, when brought to market, were found to be damp and cold, and unfit for immediate use. There being at the same time very little old corn of good quality remaining, the few samples of the new which were fit for use were in great demand, and fetched high prices." By the close of the year 1817 the average for wheat had risen again to 85*s.* 4*d.*; the ports opened in February, 1818; but, notwithstanding large importations, prices still continued to rise. After a rather wet spring, a drought, which commenced about the middle of May, continued almost without interruption till the middle of September, being the most severe that had been experienced in England since 1794. "Apprehensions," Mr. Tooke continues, "were in consequence entertained of stunted crops of every description of vegetation. Hay got up to 9*l.* and 10*l.* the load. Beans, peas, turnips, and potatoes, were supposed to have totally failed. It was on the ground of anticipations of scarcity, in consequence of this character of the season, that British corn was bought freely on speculation, and that many farmers were induced to hold back their stocks: many persons, likewise, importers as well as dealers and farmers, reasoned erroneously on the operation of the corn laws, and supposed that, when once the ports were shut, having the monopoly of the home market, they would be secure of obtaining, at worst, within a trifle of the opening price of 80*s.*" The entire importation of wheat in this year amounted to a million and a-half of quarters. But an unhealthy speculation went on in many other articles as well as in grain. The imports of silk, of wool, of cotton, and various other descriptions of foreign produce, were doubled, and in some cases tripled, since 1816. The entire quantity of foreign and colonial produce imported in 1818 was double what it had been in 1816, and very nearly half as much again as it had been in 1817. The so called prosperity, therefore, which was beginning to dazzle men's eyes when Parliament met had much more in it of show than of substance. It was for the greater part mere speculative excitement. "A state of prosperity," as Mr. Tooke observes, "it doubtless was, as long as it lasted, to those who were gaining, or appeared to be gaining, by the rising markets; but to the bulk of the population those rising markets were the occasion of privation and suffering." It was not long before symptoms of this suffering began to show themselves.

For a time, however, there was certainly an improvement in the political temper of the popular mind. What we may call its combustibility was considerably reduced. Bamford tells us, indeed, that with the restoration of the Habeas Corpus Act the agitation for reform was renewed, and that numerous meetings for the promotion of that object were held in various parts of the country; but we find no mention any where either of secret combination among the radical reformers of the earlier part of the year 1818 or of proceedings contemplating a resort to violence, no trace of conspiracy any more than of disturbance, of any attempt either to defy or to elude the law. Having recovered the legal rights and liberties of which they had been for a season deprived, the first feeling even of the generality of those who carried farthest

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History of Prices,
ii. 20.Tooke on Prices,
ii. 61, 62.

Id. p. 27.

Passages in the
Life of a Radical,
i. 164.

1818. a desire to amend the constitution seems to have been to take their stand, nevertheless, upon the constitution—somewhat after Bacon's notion of the true import of the scriptural injunction to stand fast in the old ways, which he interprets as meaning "that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but, when the discovery is well taken, then to make progression." Whatever may have been the darker designs of a few individuals, this was unquestionably the present disposition both of the working classes as a body and of the great majority of their leaders. The fuel that would have been required for a more thoroughgoing zeal, or a more desperate course of action, was for the present burnt out. The nearly universal inclination was at least to try what could be done with the law and by means of the law before attempting to act without it and against it. So much, at any rate, was gained by the restoration of the constitution. Then, however delusive or hollow might be much of the apparent economical prosperity of the country, the people were yet for the moment certainly better off than they had been. If the price of food was still high, and was even ascending, it was notwithstanding much lower than it had been in the early part of the preceding year. Employment too, so long as the tide of speculation was rising, was really more plentiful, and wages had advanced. A spirit of activity, enterprise, and hope, had succeeded to general stagnation and despondency in the commercial and manufacturing world; and, with both their hands and their minds busied about matters of nearer and more natural concernment, the working classes found their interest in projects of political innovation considerably moderated, and also probably their views somewhat sobered down.

PROCEEDINGS OF
PARLIAMENT.

Meanwhile, the Parliament, at once the workshop of legislation and the arena of party contest, went on filling the air with the din of its labours and its battles. The great subject of discussion for the first two months of the Session was the conduct of Ministers in the application of their late extraordinary powers. Here Ministers themselves may be said to have taken the initiative. A green bag containing papers relative to the recent state of the country was, by command of the Prince Regent, presented in the Lords on the 2nd of February, and in the Commons on the day following; and Secret Committees to consider and report upon the papers were appointed in both Houses. In the Commons the motion for the appointment of the Committee, which was made by Lord Castlereagh on the 5th, gave rise to some debate; but there was no division upon the main question. The two Committees presented their Reports, that of the Lords on the 23rd, that of the Commons on the 27th. As the members of both had been, in point of fact, named by the Government, they quite agreed, of course, in their view of the matters which had been submitted to their consideration. Referring to what they described as the rising that had taken place in Derbyshire on the 9th of June, the Lords stated that the insurgents engaged in that affair were not formidable for their numbers, but were actuated by an atrocious spirit. The language of many of them, it was affirmed, and particularly of their leaders, left no room to doubt "that their objects were the overthrow of the established government and laws; extravagant as those objects were, when compared with the inadequate means which they possessed." It was afterwards admitted, however,

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that in the villages through which they passed a strong indisposition was manifested towards their cause and projects; and the insurrection was characterized as "of small importance in itself," and only a subject of material consideration as confirming the statements in the Reports of the Secret Committees of the preceding session. The fact of this actual insurrection, so clearly proved, and about which there could be no dispute, appeared, it was declared, "to the Committee to have established, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the credit due to the information mentioned in the last Report, respecting the plans of more extended insurrection which had previously been concerted, and respecting the postponement of those plans to the 9th or 10th of June." Reference was also made to the movements in and near Nottingham on the night of the 9th of June, to a meeting of delegates held at Huddersfield on the 6th, and a tumultuous assemblage which took place in that neighbourhood on the night of the 8th, and to the expectations proved to have been entertained in Yorkshire and the other disturbed districts, of powerful support and co-operation from London—"however erroneous such an expectation may have been, with respect to the extent to which it was supposed to have existed"—as farther confirmatory of the statements in the same Report. But a decided opinion was expressed that, not only in the country in general, but in those districts where the designs of the disaffected were most actively and unremittingly pursued, the great body of the people had remained untainted, even during the periods of the greatest internal difficulty and distress. It was intimated, however, that some of the persons who had been engaged in the late desperate projects, particularly in London, were still active, and appeared determined to persevere, though with decreasing numbers and resources. The Report then proceeded to take up the subject of the arrests that had taken place during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In addition to the cases of persons against whom bills of indictment had been found by grand juries, and of those who had either been tried or had fled from justice, warrants, it was stated, had been issued by the Secretary of State against ten persons who had not been taken, and against forty-four others who had not been brought to trial. Of these, seven had been discharged on examination; one had been released after being finally committed; another had been discharged on account of illness; another had died in prison. All these arrests and detentions the Committee considered to have been fully justified by the circumstances under which they had taken place. "The Committee," it was added, "understand, that up to a certain period expectations were entertained of being able to bring to trial a large proportion of the persons so arrested and detained; but that these expectations have, from time to time, been unavoidably relinquished." On the whole, it had appeared to the Committee, the Report declared in conclusion, that the Government, in the execution of the powers vested in it by the two Acts of the last session, had acted with due discretion and moderation. The Report of the Committee of the Commons travelled over the subject by nearly the same road; its expressions, however, upon the different points of the case, were generally stronger, and it adverted to a few additional facts or circumstances. The outbreak at Derby on the night of the 9th of June was designated an insurrection, and described as "the last open attempt to carry into effect the

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revolution which had so long been the object of an extended conspiracy." The trials at Derby, however, were referred to as proving the exemplary conduct of the mass of the population in the country through which the insurrection passed; and the Committee had no doubt that the numbers of those who were either pledged or prepared to engage in actual insurrection had generally been much exaggerated by the leaders of the disaffected, from the obvious policy both of giving importance to themselves, and of encouraging their followers. They hoped that the time of delusion might be passing away; but it was nevertheless their opinion, that it would still require all the vigilance of Government, and of the magistracy, to maintain the tranquillity which had been restored. "Your Committee," the Report then proceeded, "have hitherto applied their observations to the lately disturbed districts in the country. In adverting to the state of the metropolis during the same period, they have observed with concern that a small number of active and infatuated individuals have been unremittingly engaged in arranging plans of insurrection, in endeavouring to foment disturbances that might lead to it, and in procuring the means of active operations, with the ultimate view of subverting all the existing institutions of the country, and substituting some form of revolutionary government in their stead." The proselytes, however, that these leaders had gained to their cause had not been numerous; nor did the mischief appear to have extended beyond the lower order of artisans, nor to have received countenance from any individuals of higher condition. In conclusion, the Committee expressed it as their opinion, that the vigilance of the police, and the unrelaxed superintendence of Government, would probably, under present circumstances, be sufficient to prevent the agitators from breaking out into any serious disturbance of the public peace; and they declared, without hesitation, that the discretion entrusted to Government by the acts of the last session had been exercised temperately and judiciously, and that Ministers would have failed in their duty, as guardians of the peace and tranquillity of the realm, if they had not exercised their powers to the extent which they had done.

Neither Report excited much debate when it was presented. Mr. Tierney, however, made some remarks upon that laid before the Commons, which he concluded by observing, that "it was scarcely worth while to oppose seriously the motion for printing a document so absurd, contemptible, and ludicrous." Meanwhile, on the 25th, a Bill had been brought into the Lords, entitled "A Bill for Indemnifying Persons who, since the 26th of January, 1817, have acted in apprehending, imprisoning, or detaining in custody, persons suspected of high treason or treasonable practices, and in the suppression of tumultuous and unlawful assemblies." In the awkwardness that there would have been in any member of the Cabinet proposing such a measure of wholesale sanction and oblivion for any irregularities that might have been committed by himself and his colleagues, this Bill of Indemnity was presented by the Duke of Montrose, who held the household office of Master of the Horse. It was warmly and repeatedly debated in both Houses; but all the attacks of the opposition were repelled by overwhelming numbers on the divisions. In the Lords the second reading was carried on the 27th of February by a majority of 100 to 33 votes; and the third reading, on the 5th of March, by a majority

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of 93 to 27. If we may judge by the attendance, no very general interest was taken by their lordships in the matter :—the number of peers present on the first of these two divisions was no more than 71, including only 15 opponents of the bill ; on the second there were 67 peers present, including 12 of the Opposition. The task of supporting the measure was chiefly sustained by Lord Liverpool and the Lord Chancellor ; the principal speakers on the other side were the Marquess of Lansdowne, Lord Erskine, and Lord Holland. A long and strong protest was entered on the Journals by these three and seven other peers ; in which it was argued, that there had manifestly been no widely-spread traitorous conspiracy, nor even any extensive disaffection to the Government ; that tranquillity might have been equally restored by a vigorous execution of the ordinary laws ; that, the only legal effect of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus being that it suspends the deliverance of the accused, Ministers were not entitled to a general indemnity for all the arrests that had been issued upon mere suspicion, or expectation of evidence which was never produced, and for all the numerous and long imprisonments that had followed, until an open and impartial investigation should have taken place ; that, from the mistaken principle of the bill, illegal proceedings were equally protected by it, whether they had been meritorious or malicious ; and that it was not the occasional resort to secret and impure sources of evidence in cases of clear necessity, but the systematic encouragement of that manner of proceeding, that was sanctioned by such a bill as the present. In the Commons, the first reading of the bill was carried on the 9th of March by a majority of 190 to 64 ; the second reading, on the 10th, by 89 to 24 ; the committal, on the 11th, by 238 to 65 ; the third reading, on the 13th, by 82 to 23. Then, after one or two amendments had been negatived, the bill was passed, Mr. Brougham declaring that, although he and his friends would not again divide the House, they were as desirous at that moment as ever to avow their hostility to the detestable principle of the measure, and Mr. Tierney following him with the declaration that he believed it to be one of the most detestable measures ever introduced into Parliament. The discussions throughout had been conducted in a tone of considerable asperity, rising at times to passionate vehemence. The most remarkable speeches made against the bill were those of Mr. Lambton (afterwards Earl of Durham), Sir Samuel Romilly, and Mr. Brougham. The charge of the measure was taken by the Attorney-General (Sir William Garrow) ; the other principal speakers in support of it were the Solicitor-General (Sir Samuel Shepherd), Mr. Canning, and Mr. Lamb (late Viscount Melbourne), who on this occasion left his party, as he had also done in voting for the Suspension Bills of the preceding session. Canning spoke on the motion for going into committee ; and one passage of his speech raised a great clamour, which was long kept up. Referring to certain petitioners who had come before the House with complaints of harsh treatment to which they had been subjected after being arrested under the suspension, he designated one of them, whose case had been made the theme of much pathetic eloquence, as “ the revered and ruptured Ogden.” There was some controversy at the time as to whether the latter epithet was correctly reported ; but there is no doubt that it was the word he employed. The fact was that Ogden, while he lay in confinement, had been cured of a rupture of twenty years’ standing at the public expense,

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It was not only in the great debates on the Address and the Indemnity Bill that Ministers were put upon their defence. The Opposition took advantage of many other opportunities of attacking their recent conduct. Hone's case, and the general question of Informations *ex officio*, were brought before the Commons on the 3rd of February by Mr. W. Smith, and shortly debated. On the 10th of the same month, Lord Archibald Hamilton brought forward the subject of the late prosecutions instituted against state prisoners in Scotland, by moving that there should be laid before the House a copy of the proceedings on the trial of Andrew M'Kinley before the Court of Justiciary on the 19th of July. The motion, besides being introduced by a long speech from his Lordship, was ably supported by Mr. J. P. Grant and Sir Samuel Romilly, but was negatived on a division by a majority of 136 to 71. The following day another debate of considerable length took place on a motion of Mr. Fazakerley, that the Committee of Secrecy should be instructed to inquire and report whether any and what measures had been taken to detect and bring to justice the parties described in one of the Reports of the Secret Committee of last session, as persons who might, by their language and conduct, in some instances have had the effect of encouraging those designs which it was intended they should be only the instruments of detecting. The principal speakers were, in support of the motion, Lord Milton (now Earl Fitzwilliam), Mr. Bennet, Sir S. Romilly, and Mr. Tierney; against it, Mr. Bathurst (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Mr. Wilberforce, the Solicitor-General, and Mr. Canning. Wilberforce, however, expressed his strong disapprobation of the employment of spies in any circumstances. The numbers on the division were, for the motion, 52; against it, 111. The debate, however, brought out the general course of Oliver's proceedings into tolerably clear daylight. On the 17th Lord Folkestone (the present Earl of Radnor), moved the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the truth of the allegations of Ogden and other persons who had petitioned the House, complaining of their treatment under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. What they chiefly complained of,

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however, was their having been imprisoned at all. His lordship's speech was answered by Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Wilberforce, and the Attorney-General, and the motion was supported by Sir Francis Burdett, Sir S. Romilly, and other members; but it was negatived on a division by a majority of 167 to 58. Two days after, in the Lords, a motion by the Earl of Carnarvon to refer certain petitions of other imprisoned parties, which had been presented to that House, to the Secret Committee, was negatived without a division, after speeches in its favour from the mover, from Earl Grosvenor, Lord King, and Lord Holland; and against it from Lord Sidmouth, Earl Bathurst, and the Earl of Liverpool. Finally, on the 5th of March, another debate on the proceedings of the Government spies and informers was brought on in the Commons by Mr. G. Philips, who, after referring to certain petitions (one of these was from Samuel Bamford) presented on previous days, moved that it was the duty of the House to investigate the nature and extent of the practices therein alleged to have been pursued by Oliver and others. The votes upon this motion were, Ayes, 69; Noes, 162. In the debate it was opposed, as the others of a similar character or tendency had all been, by Wilberforce, notwithstanding that Tierney, who spoke before him, had expressed his full concurrence in the doctrine that the employment of spies and informers by a Government was indefensible in any circumstances, and his vote had been distinctly claimed as due to that principle, which he had been the first to proclaim. He objected to the motion as loose, vague, and indefinite. Let a definite motion be made, he said, and he would support it. He could compare the present motion, and some others like it, to nothing else than a pack of hounds in full cry, scouring the fields and starting a hare in every corner. The most sober, and perhaps the most sensible, view was that taken by Lord Stanley (the present Earl of Derby), who said, that "he should support the motion, but not on the ground that Ministers were guilty of employing spies for the purpose of fomenting disturbances in the country. His belief was that Oliver and others had been solely employed to discover what was doing in the disturbed districts. Where blame was fairly to be cast on Ministers was, he thought, in the manner in which those spies were chosen. Though Ministers did not warrant the fomenting of disturbances, yet they left it in the power of those acting under them to do so. . . . He thought Ministers had been much calumniated; but they would be most so by themselves, if they refused to inquire into those acts, when inquiry, according to their own statement, would fully acquit them of the charges laid against them."

Such was the course of the main struggle in which the two parties tried their strength: for the history of the remaining business of the session a summary of results must suffice. Many subjects were taken up, and no doubt something was effected by the mere discussion of several of them; but very few were actually legislated upon. Early in the session a committee was appointed by the Commons to consider the state of the Poor Laws on the motion of Mr. Sturges Bourne, who had officiated as chairman of a similar committee in the preceding session; and three bills were afterwards brought in on the recommendation of the committee; one for the establishment of Select Vestries, another for the general amendment of the Poor Laws, a third for the special regulation of the Law of Settlement. But it was soon agreed

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to postpone the Parish Settlement Bill to the next session; the Poor Law Amendment Bill, after having passed through all its stages in both Houses, was lost through a disagreement between the Lords and Commons in regard to one of its clauses; the Select Vestries Bill alone became law. In the beginning of March, the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Education of the Lower Orders, which had already pursued its important inquiries for two sessions, was reappointed on the motion of its chairman, Mr. Brougham. Besides two Reports, which were presented and ordered to be printed towards the end of the session, it originated a bill "For appointing Commissioners to inquire concerning Charities in England for the Education of the Poor," which passed into a law, though not without suffering some curtailment and mutilation in the Lords, where, indeed, the motion for going into committee upon it was opposed both by the Chancellor and Lord Redesdale, but was carried nevertheless by a majority of 10 to 8. In conformity with the recommendation contained in the speech of the Prince Regent at the opening of the session, an act was passed "For Building and promoting the building of additional Churches in populous Parishes," by means of a grant of one million sterling, to be applied under the direction of Commissioners appointed by the Crown. Of various attempts made to reform the criminal law, none of any importance were successful with the exception of a bill brought in by Mr. Bennet for establishing a better system of rewarding persons who had been instrumental in apprehending highway robbers and other offenders; and another brought in by Mr. G. Bankes for making it illegal to buy game, as it already was to sell it. Sir S. Romilly carried a bill through the Commons for taking away the penalty of death from the offence of stealing from a shop to the value of five shillings; but it was thrown out on the second reading in the Lords on the motion of the Chancellor. The same potent voice prevailed upon their lordships to reject at the same stage, by a majority of 31 to 13, a bill introduced by Lord Erskine, "To prevent Arrests on the charge of Libel before Indictment found." In the Commons, however, the Government only succeeded in defeating a motion of Sir James Mackintosh for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the Forgery of the Bank of England notes, by proposing an address to the Regent, requesting his Royal Highness to issue a commission under the great seal for the same purpose. A select committee was appointed on the motion of Mr. Sergeant Onslow to inquire into the effect of the Usury Laws, which reported in favour of their repeal; and the honourable member gave notice, that he would early in the next session bring in a bill to carry that recommendation into effect. A bill for the amendment of the Election Laws, brought in by Mr. Wynn, was negatived on the third reading in the Commons by a majority of 51 to 44; as was another for the alteration of the law relating to Tithes, brought in by Mr. Curwen, by a majority of 44 to 15 on the second reading. Repeated discussions took place on a bill introduced by Sir Robert Peel (father of the present Baronet) for limiting the number of hours during which apprentices and others employed in cotton and other mills and factories should be permitted to work; it passed the Commons, but it was at last dropped for the present session, after being committed, in the Lords, where it had encountered a strong opposition, counsel having been allowed by their lordships to be heard and

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evidence to be brought forward against it. Mr. J. Smith obtained leave to bring in a bill for the amendment of the Bankruptcy Laws; but it appears not to have been persevered with. Nor did any thing come of a bill to amend the Copyright Act of 1814, which was brought in by Sir Egerton Brydges, and carried over some stages in the Commons. But a select committee was afterwards appointed to consider the subject on the motion of Mr. Wynn, which recommended that the Copyright Act should be repealed except in regard to the delivery of one copy of every new work to the British Museum, the other public libraries being compensated by a fixed pecuniary allowance. On the 2nd of June, Sir Francis Burdett brought forward a scheme of Parliamentary Reform in a series of twenty-six resolutions (the last divided into six heads), comprising the principles of universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, elections all on the same day, vote by ballot, and a fresh Parliament once in every year at the least; the motion was seconded by Lord Cochrane (the present Earl of Dundonald), who observed that it might probably be the last time he should ever have the honour of addressing the House on any subject, and alluded with great feeling, and apparently amidst the general sympathy of the House, to his own cruel case; afterwards Mr. Brougham, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Lamb, all spoke at considerable length; and then, the vote being taken on the previous question, which had been moved by Canning, the numbers were found to be 106 to none, the two tellers, Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane, being left alone on their own side. About a fortnight before this Sir Robert Heron had moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the Septennial Act, and the motion had been supported both by Sir S. Romilly and Mr. Brougham, but it was negatived on a division by a majority of 117 to 42. Most of the leading Whigs voted in the minority.

There was one question about which the keenest interest had suddenly sprung up in Scotland in the course of the preceding year, the reform of the constitution of the burghs of that part of the kingdom. The Scotch burgh system as it still existed had been established by an Act of Parliament passed in 1469, the general operation of which was to perpetuate in the government of the burghs, if not always the same individuals, at least the same party and even personal and family interests, by the simple expedient of giving the retiring office-holders in the corporations, or town-councils, the power for the most part at the end of each year of electing their own successors. They generally, of course, either re-elected themselves, or, where that could not be done, brought in, upon a well-understood and rarely violated arrangement, certain confederates or doubles of themselves, who in like manner, at the end of another twelvemonth, gave place again to their predecessors, and retired for a season into private life. Some constitutions, or *sets* as they were called, were not quite so close as others; but the slight infusion that was permitted of the popular element was in no case sufficient to give the general body of the burgesses any control over the management of affairs. The reform or breaking up of this close system had been one of the principal objects pursued by the liberal or democratic party in Scotland in the political agitation that spread over the interval between the American and French wars; but this, like the other projects of change among ourselves which the success of the American revolution had brought forth and fostered, was smothered for the time in the

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horror and terror produced by that of France, and in the new interests and passions with which the new war filled men's minds. Now, however, after the return of peace, the former zeal upon this subject, reawakened by what may be accounted an accident, was kept alive and diffused by a remarkable concurrence of circumstances. The movement took its beginning from a singular and unexpected catastrophe which befel the burgh of Montrose. The opposition party there, in the early part of the year 1817, made application to the Court of Session, the supreme civil judicature in Scotland, to reduce or declare invalid the last election of their magistrates on the ground of certain formal irregularities, and, probably not a little to their own surprise, obtained a decision in their favour. The effect was to leave the burgh not only without a town council, but without any means of creating one till it should get a new charter from the Crown. In this state of things application was made to the Privy Council; and that body, or in other words the Government, instead of merely reviving the old constitution, as it might have been expected to do, was induced to hazard the experiment of allowing a certain number of the new magistrates to be elected, as the inhabitants had petitioned they might be, by the general body of the burgesses. This example of a poll election immediately produced the strongest excitement in all the other burghs. Meanwhile some other events contributed to blow the flame. The burgh of Aberdeen found itself compelled to declare itself in a state of bankruptcy, with liabilities to the amount of some hundred thousands of pounds; and the magistrates accompanied this announcement with an address, in which they declared it to be their decided opinion, that the existing mode of election of the town council, and the management of the town's affairs, were radically defective and improvident, tending to give to individuals or parties an excessive and unnatural preponderance, and to foster and encourage a system of secrecy and concealment, under which the best intentioned magistrates might be prevented from acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the true situation of the burgh. A similar declaration was soon after publicly and formally made by the ruling party in the burgh of Dundee, where also dissatisfaction with the established system had long been general, although the pecuniary concerns of the burgh had not been so grossly mismanaged as in Aberdeen. From this time meetings of the burgesses and inhabitants began to be held, not only in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, and the other principal burghs, but in many also of those of inferior importance; and the most strenuous measures were taken for bringing about what the Aberdeen magistrates had declared in their address to be imperatively called for—some change in the manner of electing the town councils, and the securing to the citizens an effectual control over the expenditure of the town's office-bearers. In this state matters were when Lord Archibald Hamilton brought the subject before the House of Commons on the 13th of February. The professed object of his motion was to obtain a copy of the act or warrant of his Majesty in Council, dated in the preceding September, by which the poll election of magistrates at Montrose had been authorized, and the set of the burgh altered. He did not object to the poll election; but he contended that the granting of the new constitution, while he admitted it to be an improvement upon the old one, and a benefit to the burgh, was the

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usurpation of an unconstitutional and illegal power on the part of the Crown. By this time, in fact, the leaders in the movement had extended their views much beyond the amount of alteration that had been conceded in the case of Montrose, and had also come clearly to see that the reform of the burgh system could not be left in the hands of the Crown, but must be sought from Parliament. Lord Archibald acknowledged that his present motion was merely preliminary, and that his intention was, having got this point of the legality of the Montrose warrant settled, to call the attention of the House to a more extensive consideration of the subject after Easter. The motion, however, after a short debate, in the course of which Ministers contended that Scotch burgh reform was little else than parliamentary reform under another name, was negatived without a division. Later in the session the Lord Advocate (Mr. Maconochie) brought in a bill "For the better regulating the mode of accounting for the common good and revenues of the royal burghs of Scotland, and for controlling and preventing the undue expenditure thereof." But this proposed measure was found to give no satisfaction to any party; and the bill, after being read only a first time, was withdrawn. Nor did Lord Archibald Hamilton introduce the subject again in the present session.

Unsuccessful attempts were also made by Lord A. Hamilton to urge on the Government the abolition of the Scotch Commissary Courts, in conformity with the recommendation of a commission of inquiry appointed by royal warrant in 1808; by General Thornton, to repeal the declarations required to be taken in certain cases against the belief of transubstantiation, and asserting the worship of the Church of Rome to be idolatrous; and by Dr. Phillimore, to amend the Marriage Act of 1753, in respect of its making the marriages of infants by licence without consent of parents or guardians void *ab initio*, if a suit for the avoidance of them should be commenced at any time during the lives of the parties. The principal taxes that were made the subjects of assault were the salt duties, the leather tax, and the Irish window tax. Ministers made no opposition to Mr. Calcraft's motion for a select committee on the salt duties; and a bill afterwards brought in by the honourable member, on the recommendation of the committee for reducing the duty on rock-salt, used for agricultural purposes, from 10*l.*, to which it had been reduced in the preceding session, to 5*l.* per ton, was passed. Ministers also offered Lord Althorpe a committee on his moving for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the additional duty upon leather imposed in 1812, against which numerous petitions had been presented; but his Lordship persisted in going to a division, and the motion was carried by a majority of 94 to 84. The bill, however, was thrown out on the second reading, the numbers on that occasion being, Ayes, 130; Noes, 136. A committee to consider the expediency of repealing the Irish window tax was moved for by Mr. Shaw; but, after a debate of some length the motion was negatived by 67 votes to 51. Finally, it may be noticed in connexion with this subject, that after several remonstrances from Mr. Brougham, Ministers agreed to see that proper measures were taken for carrying into effect the destruction of all returns under the abolished income tax. This had been promised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer two years before, but the directions then issued had, it appeared, been very imperfectly complied with.

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THE BUDGET.

The Budget was brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 20th of April. The greater part of the navy, army, ordnance, and miscellaneous estimates had been already voted; and Mr. Vansittart now stated that the vote for the army, which had last year been 9,412,373*l.*, would this year be 8,970,000*l.*; that the vote for the navy, which had last year been 7,596,022*l.*, would this year be 6,456,800*l.*; that the vote for the ordnance, which had last year been 1,270,690*l.*, would this year be 1,245,600*l.*; that the miscellaneous estimates, which last year amounted to 1,795,000*l.*, would this year amount to 1,720,000*l.*,—without including, however, the million granted for the building of churches, which was to be provided for by an issue of Exchequer bills. Altogether, with the addition of 2,500,000*l.* for the interest on Exchequer bills and a sinking fund attached to them, and one or two extraordinary items, the total amount of the regular supplies for the service of the year would be 21,011,000*l.*, the amount for the last year having been 22,304,091*l.* This was, of course, exclusive of the interest of the debt (which at this time was not quite 30,000,000*l.*) No new taxes were proposed, nor the repeal or reduction of any old ones. The principal feature of the finance minister's announcement was a scheme for forming, out of the 3 per cent. stock, a new stock bearing interest at 3½ per cent., by which a sum of 3,000,000*l.* would be raised for the public service of the year. It was proposed also to fund 27,000,000*l.* of the floating debt, which had accumulated to the inconvenient amount of about 63,000,000*l.*

BANK RESTRICTION ACT.

The session had scarcely commenced when Ministers were asked in both Houses, whether it was intended that the resumption of cash payments by the Bank should really take place on the 5th of July, as then fixed by law. In reply it was stated that the Bank had made ample preparation for resuming its payments in cash at the time fixed by Parliament, and that the Government knew of nothing in the internal state of the country, or in its political relations with foreign powers, which would render it expedient to continue the restriction; "but that there was reason to believe that pecuniary arrangements of foreign powers were going on of such a nature and extent as might probably make it necessary for Parliament to continue the restriction so long as the immediate effects of those arrangements were in operation." This explanation was treated by the Opposition with great contempt. "The truth was, as it appeared to him," Mr. Tierney observed, "that there were some persons in this country very much disposed to continue the restriction if they could find any excuse for it; and, as such excuse did not offer itself at home, they looked abroad for it." In the other House, Lord King declared that the reason assigned by Ministers "was so extraordinary in itself, and so unintelligible to the country, it being impossible to conceive how in reality the negotiation of foreign loans could tend to prevent the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England, that it could only be considered as the ostensible reason, and not the real one." Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the explanation thus denounced was perfectly correct. Mr. Tooke shows that by the latter part of 1817 the value of Bank paper had been virtually restored, and that the Bank was then in a position to resume cash payments. "And the directors," he adds, "so far from taking advantage of the prolonged term of the restriction, were adopting measures for anticipating it; for

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in the months of April and September 1817 they actually undertook by public notice to pay, and did pay, a large proportion of their notes in coin." It is understood that the payments in gold in pursuance of these notices exceeded five millions sterling. Mr. Tooke blames the Bank and the Government for co-operating to reduce the rate of interest on exchequer bills in the summer of 1817, while it was notorious that negotiations were going forward for the raising of loans to a very large amount by France and others of the continental states. "The Government," he argues, "ought to have taken the opportunity of the comparatively high price of stocks in the summer of 1817 to have diminished instead of increasing the unfunded debt; and the Bank, instead of extending its advances upon exchequer bills at a reduced interest, ought, with a view to counteract the effect, which would otherwise be inevitable, of the tendency of British capital to investment in foreign loans, not only not to have extended its advances, but to have diminished its existing securities." But now commenced both a depression of the exchanges and a diminution of the circulation from the operation of a fresh set of disturbing causes. "Foremost among these causes," Mr. Tooke continues, "doubtless were the large loans negotiated for the French and Russian governments, the high rate of interest granted by them, and the comparatively low rate in this country, holding out a great inducement for the transmission of British capital to the continent. The importations of corn in the latter part of 1817, and through the whole of 1818, were on a large scale and at high prices, our ports being then open without duty. And there was at the same time, as has before been noticed, a very great increase of our general imports; while a great part of the exports of 1817 and 1818 were speculative, and on long credits, the returns for which therefore would not be forthcoming till 1819 and 1820. Under these circumstances it is rather matter of surprise that the exchanges were not more depressed, than that they were so much depressed, in 1818." For this state of things the Bank and the Government might, indeed, have made preparation; they ought at least to have abstained from pursuing a course which gave additional facilities to the negotiation of the foreign loans; but, that mischief having been done, the depression of the exchanges thereby produced certainly furnished a good reason for the postponement of the resumption. A bill was eventually brought into the House of Commons for continuing the restriction till the 5th of July, 1819; various amendments were moved in both Houses, but were only supported by insignificant minorities, and the bill was passed in the end of May. The measure, however, drew two long protests from Lord Lauderdale, in one of which his Lordship declared the ground on which it had been introduced and supported—that the raising of foreign loans would drain this country of its coin—to be "an opinion founded on gross misconception and ignorance of the subject."

Some rather remarkable proceedings took place in the course of the session in relation to the Royal Family, no fewer than four members of which were married in the earlier part of this year. The first of the four marriages was that of the Princess Elizabeth, his Majesty's third daughter, to his Serene Highness Frederic Joseph Louis Charles Augustus, Landgrave and Hereditary Prince of Hesse Homburg, on the 7th of April. In this case the two

ROYAL
MARRIAGES.

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Houses of Parliament were asked only to offer their congratulations to the Regent, the Queen, and the new-married couple. As the bride had nearly completed her forty-eighth year, her marriage could not be expected to contribute any thing towards continuing the line of the old King, who now, notwithstanding his fifteen sons and daughters, twelve of whom were still alive, was left without any descendant beyond the first generation. A few days afterwards, however (on the 13th of April), Lord Liverpool brought down a message from the Regent to the Lords, and Lord Castlereagh to the Commons, in which his Royal Highness informed the House that treaties of marriage were in negotiation between the Duke of Clarence and the Princess (Adelaide Louisa Theresa Caroline Amelia) of Saxe Meiningen, eldest daughter of the late reigning Duke of Saxe Meiningen, and also between the Duke of Cambridge and the Princess (Augusta Wilhelmina Louisa) of Hesse, youngest daughter of the Landgrave Frederic and niece of the Elector of Hesse; and which went on to say, that, after the afflicting calamity which the Prince and the nation had sustained in the loss of the Princess Charlotte, his Royal Highness was fully persuaded that the House of Commons would feel how essential it was to the best interests of the country, that he should be enabled to make a suitable provision for such of his royal brothers as should have contracted marriages with the consent of the Crown. This last expression was designed to intimate both that the proposed provision was not to be extended to the Duke of Sussex, and that it was to comprehend the Duke of Cumberland, who had been married three years ago (to the Princess Frederica Sophia Charlotta, daughter of Frederic V. Duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz, and previously the wife, first, of Frederic Louis Charles Prince of Prussia, from whom she had been divorced, and secondly, of Frederic William Prince of Solms Braunfels). The Duchess of Cumberland was niece to the Queen; but for some unexplained reason, her Majesty refused to receive her Royal Highness after she came over to this country. It was generally understood that the refusal was occasioned by the conduct of the Duchess in breaking off a previous negotiation of marriage with the Duke of Cambridge. The Duke of Cumberland, however, was not popular; and when soon after his marriage a bill was brought in by Ministers to grant him an additional allowance of 6000*l.* a year, advantage was taken of the Queen's disapprobation, and the bill, which had been resisted by formidable minorities both on the motion for leave to bring it in and on the first reading, was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of one, the numbers being 126 against 125. It was hoped that now this decision might be reversed. Considerably larger sums were originally contemplated; but Ministers were induced, by strong manifestations of adverse feeling both in and out of Parliament, to pause and modify their proposition; and they determined to ask only an additional 10,000*l.* a year for the Duke of Clarence, and 6,000*l.* for the Dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge, and for the Duke of Kent if he too should marry. When Lord Castlereagh on the 15th moved a resolution to the effect that 10,000*l.* a year should be granted to the Duke of Clarence, Mr. Canning observed that in voting for this sum "they would vote only for one half of the sum originally proposed, a sum the propriety of which both his noble friend and himself thought then, and still thought, maintainable

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by fair argument, but which they had no hesitation in surrendering to the expressed opinion of that House." But on Mr. Sumner moving that the 10,000*l.* should be reduced to 6,000*l.* this amendment was carried by a majority of 193 to 184. "The result," it is stated, "was received with loud shouts of approbation; amidst which Lord Castlereagh rose and observed, that, since the house had thought proper to refuse the larger sum to the Duke of Clarence, he believed he might say that the negotiation for the marriage might be considered at an end." On the following day his Lordship informed the House that the Duke declined availing himself of the inadequate sum which had been voted to him. He then proposed the 6,000*l.* a year for the Duke of Cambridge, which was carried, but not till after a debate of some length, and a division, in which the numbers were 177 for the resolution, and 95 against it. Rising again, his Lordship moved that a similar grant should be made to the Duke of Cumberland; but this motion, after a warm debate, was negatived by a majority of 143 to 136. "Loud cheering," we are told, "took place in the House when the result of the division was known." On the 13th of May another message was brought down announcing that the Prince Regent had given his consent to a marriage between the Duke of Kent and her Serene Highness Mary Louisa Victoria, daughter of the Duke of Saxe Coburg Saalfeld, widow of Enrich Charles, Prince of Leiningen, and sister of Prince Leopold. Of all these royal marriages this was the one which the heart of the country went most along with; the Duke of Kent had attached himself to the popular party, and the relationship of the lady to Prince Leopold and the lamented Princess Charlotte was of itself sufficient to awaken a strong interest in her favour. If the nation might have had its wish, it would have been from the first that that should happen which has actually fallen out, that to the issue of this marriage the inheritance of the crown should descend. Yet even the grant of the additional 6,000*l.* a year to the Duke of Kent was stoutly opposed in the Commons; 51 members, among whom were Lord Althorpe, Mr. Coke of Norfolk, Lord Folkestone, Mr. Lambton, and Mr. Tierney, voting against it. The number of votes in its favour, however, was more than four times as many. Meanwhile the public had learned, with some surprise, that the marriage of the Duke of Clarence was to take place after all. That of the Duke of Cambridge was solemnized on the 1st of June; those of the Dukes of Clarence and Kent on the 13th of the month following. In connexion with the subject of the Royal Family, it may be here mentioned, that the portion of the Regency Act relating to the custody of the King's person was this session altered by a short bill which Ministers introduced, repealing the clause which made it necessary that Parliament should reassemble immediately in case of the death of the Queen, and also adding four members to the council appointed to assist her Majesty. As at first drawn up the bill gave the nomination of the four new members to her Majesty; but it was ultimately conceded that they should be appointed by Parliament. In other words, their names were inserted in the bill. What occasioned this measure was an illness with which the Queen had been attacked; but she had nearly recovered before the bill passed.

Hansard's Parli-
mentary Debates
xxxviii. 114.

Id. p. 151.

On the subject of the Slave Trade acts were passed for carrying into effect a SLAVE TRADE. treaty with Spain, and a convention with Portugal. The Spanish treaty

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(signed at Madrid on the 23rd of September in the preceding year) went the full length of declaring the traffic in slaves illegal, from the 30th of May, 1820, throughout the entire dominions of his Catholic Majesty, and of recognising the right of search on the part of the two contracting powers, to be exercised by vessels of war, provided with special instructions for that purpose. It was stipulated that the sum of 400,000*l.* should be paid by Great Britain to Spain, in compensation for losses sustained by the subjects of his Catholic Majesty engaged in the traffic. The convention with Portugal, a much more important power in reference to this matter, did not accomplish nearly so much for the interests of humanity and civilization; all that his Most Faithful Majesty would consent to do being to abolish the traffic in slaves carried on by his subjects in any part of the coast of Africa lying north of the equator. This was done by a royal *alvara*, or law, given at Rio Janeiro, on the 6th of May in the present year. The subject of the condition and treatment of the slaves in several of our West India colonies was also brought before the House of Commons in a succession of motions by Sir S. Romilly; none of which were opposed, but which resulted in nothing except the production of some papers, and the appointment of a Select Committee to consider certain cases of cruelty alleged to have taken place in the island of Nevis.

ALIEN ACT.

The principal subject which occupied Parliament during the last six weeks of the session was the renewal of the Alien Act. This measure, differing altogether from the Alien Act which subsisted during the war, had been first introduced after the peace of Amiens in 1802. It no longer fixed the residence of aliens, but only reserved to Government and to magistrates the power of removing any of them who might become objects of suspicion. Nor had it ever been enacted as a permanent law. When it was reintroduced, after the peace in 1814, its duration had been limited to two years; and in 1816 it had been renewed for the same term. On the latter occasion, however, it had encountered the strongest opposition in its passage through Parliament. And now, when it was proposed to be continued for two years more, the fight against it was resumed by the Whig party, and the ground contested with the greatest obstinacy at every step. Its opponents, in the Commons, even divided the House on the motion for leave to bring in the bill, meeting the majority of 55 votes in its favour with a minority of 18. This was on the 5th of May. Hostile motions for papers were then made by Mr. Lambton in the one House, and by Lord Holland in the other, Mr. Lambton pushing his to a division, when 30 opposition patriots were counted against 68 ministerialists. On the 15th the second reading in the Commons, supported by 97 votes, was resisted by 35. Another division took place on the motion for going into committee; and several more in committee. On the 22nd, after it had been read a third time, first Mr. Brougham, and then Sir S. Romilly, divided the House on clauses which they proposed to insert in the bill; nor, when both had been negatived, was even the last question of all, "That the bill do pass," suffered to be carried without another division. On this concluding trial of strength the numbers were 94 against 29. The first discussion of the measure in the Lords took place on the motion for going into committee, which was made by Lord Sidmouth on the 1st of June. But by this time a discovery had been made. It had been found that, by the Act of the Scotch Parliament, passed

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in 1685, for establishing the Bank of Scotland, all foreigners holding shares to a certain amount in that bank became thereby naturalized subjects of Scotland, while by the Act of Union all subjects of Scotland were naturalized in England. Lord Sidmouth, therefore, announced, that he should propose the insertion of a clause to prevent the object of the bill from being defeated by parties taking advantage of that enactment. The motion for going into committee was carried by a majority of 34 to 15; and then, the clause by which it was proposed to meet the old Scotch Act, having been reduced by considerable tinkering to what was considered a proper form, was carried by another of 42 to 20. It deprived all foreigners of the privilege of naturalization acquired by holding bank shares, who had purchased their shares since the 28th of April. The parties whom it affected petitioned the next day to be heard by council against this retrospective disqualification; but that was refused, after another division; and, the standing orders having been suspended, on which question there were three more divisions, the bill, with the added clause, was the same day read a third time and passed. But, when it was sent down to the Commons three days afterwards, it was met there not only by another petition from the parties affected by the disqualifying clause, but by an objection founded upon the privileges of the House. It was observed that one right which foreigners acquired upon being naturalized was to import goods into the country at lower duties than aliens; and that therefore the Lords had by their amendment introduced a money clause into the bill, an interference on the part of the other House which the Commons never submitted to. On the Speaker being appealed to, he gave it as his opinion that this objection was fatal to the clause; upon which Lord Castlereagh consented at once that the clause should be negatived, and the bill passed without it. On the following day, when Lord Liverpool, on the bill being brought back to the Lords, moved that that House should not insist upon its amendment, the Opposition again divided in favour of a motion for deferring the farther consideration of the matter till the next day of meeting, but were of course beaten as usual. It was now announced that a bill would be brought in to supply the place of the defeated clause; and on the 8th leave to bring in such a bill was moved for by Lord Castlereagh in the Commons. The bill was made considerably more comprehensive than the clause had been, for it had been discovered that there were some English and Irish Acts to be guarded against, as well as the Scotch one; at the same time it was divested of the retrospective effect which had been so much objected to. An unsuccessful attempt was even made by the Opposition to prevent it from coming into operation till three or four days after it should have been enacted, on the ground that it would otherwise come upon the country without proper notice. Ministers, however, contended that people had had notice enough from the agitation the subject had already undergone in Parliament; and so, the standing orders having been again suspended, the bill went through all its stages and was passed in the Commons on the same day on which it was brought in. On the day following it was hurried in the same manner through the Lords.

This severe struggle was perhaps not altogether inspired and sustained by the particular measure respecting the principle or details of which it professed to be carried on. The moment was one at which time gained or lost was

DISSOLUTION;
10th June.

1818. of peculiar importance. Ministers, as we have seen, had, by an act passed in the latter part of the session, got rid of the clause in the Regency Act which provided that the Parliament should immediately reassemble in case of the death of the Queen. But it still remained the law that it should so reassemble on either the demise of the Crown, or the death of the Regent. The termination of the old King's protracted life could not now be far off, and was likely enough to happen any day. That event would revive the present Parliament, even notwithstanding a dissolution, if the day appointed by the writs of summons for the assembling of a new Parliament had not arrived before it took place.* In these circumstances Ministers were very impatient to bring the session to a close, and to get the new Parliament called together as expeditiously as possible. The unexpected discovery of the old Scotch Act, enabling the Opposition to renew and continue the battle on the subject of the Alien Bill, and so to have the benefit for a little longer of whatever the chapter of accidents might turn up, occasioned the loss of about a week. At last, however, on the 10th of June, the day after the supplementary Alien Bill, as it was called, was passed, the Regent came to the House of Peers, and at once put an end to the session and dissolved the Parliament. This was a very unusual, indeed in modern and constitutional times quite an unprecedented proceeding. The last instance in which the same thing had been done was when Charles II., in March 1681, suddenly and angrily dismissed his fifth and last Parliament, which he had called together at Oxford, after it had sat a week. This precedent was exactly followed in the present case; now as then, as soon as the speech from the throne had been delivered, the Lord Chancellor, by the royal command, declared the Parliament dissolved. The course thus taken excited much surprise and comment; and it also threw the Commons into considerable perplexity. When the members, after the ceremony which had made them members no longer, returned to their own House, and Mr. Manners Sutton, lately their Speaker, was proceeding to read the speech at the table, as is usual after a prorogation, Mr. Tierney objected to his doing so, as implying some approbation of the mode of dissolution that had been adopted, which he regarded as an insult to Parliament. To this it was rejoined by Lord Castlereagh, in a different tone, that at any rate they had better let the subject alone for the present, in case they should be charged with attempting to deliberate as a House of Commons when they were only a meeting of private gentlemen, and might incur a *præmunire*. In point of fact, the speech was not read. The proclamation for calling the new Parliament was issued the same afternoon; and the writs were made returnable on the 4th of August. Nothing could now bring the old Parliament to life again except the death of the King or the Regent within the interval of fifty-five days.

* The old Parliament would have assembled if the new one had not actually met, but for an act of the preceding session (the 57 Geo. III., c. 157).

CHAPTER XIV.

THE General Election kept the country in an uproar from the middle of June till the middle of July. The interest that was excited by many of the contests was almost unprecedented: and in several instances the mob proceeded far beyond its ordinary licence and violence. The contest at Westminster, in particular, drew and fixed universal attention, both by the extreme character of the outrages which took place, and by the doubt that continued to hang over the issue almost to the last. Of the two late members only Sir Francis Burdett stood again; Lord Cochrane, about to set out for South America to take the command of the naval forces of the state of Chili, declined to come forward. In these circumstances different sections of the electors looked about in different quarters. One portion of the Radicals, with an amusing ignorance of their man, applied to Mr. Wetherell (afterwards Sir Charles) to represent them;—Mr. Wetherell had acquired great glory by his successful defence of Dr. Watson in the preceding year, on his trial of seven days for high treason; and these worthy Westminster electors imagined the learned gentleman to be as good a patriot as themselves. Mr. Wetherell, who had sate in the late Parliament for Shaftesbury, got off on the plea of his professional engagements obliging him to give up the House of Commons; but he could not resist transfixing the deputation that waited upon him, by expressing his hope that they would find some other independent candidate, with whom they might unite their efforts to rescue the city of Westminster from the disgrace it had so long endured. The disgrace consisted simply in its having been represented by the two most thorough-going and far-going Reformers in Parliament. It was then determined by either the same wise men, or some other small section of Sir Francis Burdett's supporters, to put forward, in conjunction with him, his personal friend the Hon. Douglas Kinnaid, like himself the advocate of universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and the ballot. At the same time the regular Whig party addressed an invitation to Sir Samuel Romilly, which he accepted. Soon after, Captain Sir Murray Maxwell addressed the electors, offering to serve them on what he described as principles of attachment to his King, and veneration for the constitution—in other words, as a Tory and partizan of the existing Government. Sir Murray was a very gallant and distinguished naval officer, and had lately displayed the highest professional qualities on occasion of his ship, the *Alceste*, being shipwrecked on one of the Lewchew Islands, in bringing back Lord Amherst from his embassy to China; but the thought of his standing for Westminster seems to have been suggested to his friends or to himself, principally by the consideration that a candidate from the quarter-deck might probably have a good chance in a place lately represented by Lord Cochrane. As soon as he announced himself, however, the Tories rallied round him.

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GENERAL
ELECTION.

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The election commenced on the 18th of June; and Covent Garden was a scene of almost incessant confusion and riot from that morning till the evening of the 4th of July. In addition to the four candidates we have mentioned, Major Cartwright and Mr. Henry Hunt, the then friend of Cobbett, and commonly known as Orator Hunt, were proposed; the show of hands was declared to be in favour of him and Romilly; but, nevertheless, he and the Major polled very few votes;—the latter, who withdrew after the third day, only 23; Hunt, who obstinately persevered through the fifteen days, only 84, of which no more than 11 were the produce of the last eight days. Nor did Mr. Kinnaid continue the struggle longer than Major Cartwright, having in the three days polled only 65 votes. Romilly, on the other hand, took the lead from the first, and remained safe at the head of the poll. The only contest was between Burdett and Maxwell. The latter was assailed by the populace both with execrations and missiles of a more substantial kind from almost the first moment of his appearance on the hustings. On the first day he was struck with a stone on the right eye. For the first four days, nevertheless, he kept ahead of his antagonist; at the close of the fourth day's polling the numbers stood, for Maxwell 1726, for Burdett only 1263. This position of the two candidates infuriated the mob; and on the evening of the fifth day as he was returning from the hustings, Sir Murray was so severely handled as to place his life for some time in danger. He was not able again to appear in public. Both on the fourth and fifth days, too, great exertions were made by Burdett's voting friends; by that fifth evening they had the satisfaction of seeing the gallant Captain second in the race, the entire poll being announced to be, for Maxwell 2169, for Burdett 2171; and, similar efforts being continued on the following day, this difference of two was increased to very nearly two hundred. Sir Murray never recovered his ground; and the final numbers were, Romilly, 5339; Burdett, 5238; Maxwell, 4808. On one of the days of the election, the Riot Act had to be read, and the military called out. The election for the city of London, though conducted with much less violence, was almost equally exciting. Of the four late members; Sir James Shaw declined to come forward again for private reasons; the candidates were the other three, Curtis, Atkins, and Wood, together with three new men, Waithman, Thorpe, and Wilson. The second day placed Wood and these three at the head of the poll, and at the close of the election they were found in the same position, although down to the very last day a close and doubtful struggle was maintained between Thorpe and Curtis. On the morning of that sixth day, Tuesday, the 23rd of June, Curtis had a majority of 129; but the committees of his three friends who headed the poll now came to the rescue of Thorpe; the consequence was that by half-past eleven o'clock he was up with his antagonist; by twelve he was 35 ahead of him; and in the end the six competitors came in in the following order:—Wood, 5700; Wilson, 4829; Waithman, 4603; Thorpe, 4335; Curtis, 4224; Atkins, 1688. The four new members were all Whigs; Wood, who was re-elected, had been the only Whig, or anti-ministerialist, among the old ones. Another contest that attracted still more general attention was that for the representation of Westmoreland, where the late members, Viscount Lowther and his uncle the Hon. Colonel Lowther, were opposed by Mr. Brougham, in the character of

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champion of the independence of the county and its deliverer from family thralldom. All that an eloquent tongue could do was done by the new candidate; and he was at the head of the poll on the evening of the first day; but after this he fell more and more behind every hour; and on the evening of the fourth day, when he had polled only 889 votes against Colonel Lowther's 1157, he gave in. Besides about 70 members who had sat in the last Parliament for other places, there were about 190 new members returned in all. Of these about 80 were brought in after contests, in addition to about a dozen old members so returned for new places. There were altogether about 115 contested elections; so that, the entire number of constituencies in the empire being then 380, about one seat in three was disputed. Of those that were undisputed, however, about one half may have been nomination seats. Still, the contests, perhaps, were not so numerous as they would have been but for the circumstances which made it almost certain that the next Parliament would be a very short one, seeing that the death of the King, whenever it should happen, would necessarily dissolve it in six months thereafter. That seats, which were to be held by so unusually precarious a tenure, should be so eagerly sought in so many instances was a strong evidence of the excited state of party feeling. The hopes of the Whigs, in fact, were now higher than they had ever been since they had been last in office ten years ago. Mr. Ward, who had now returned to England,—though, having lost his election at Ilchester, which he had lately represented, he was, as he says, for the first time since he had been a boy, out of Parliament,—thus writes to Dr. Coplestone in the end of August:—"The next session is likely to be more interesting than the last. Opposition comes into Parliament in rather greater numbers, and in far greater spirits. It is marshalled, too, under an able and experienced leader [Tierney]. The Government don't seem much beloved. It has quite spent the popularity of the war. There seems, too, to be a great deal of discontent in the country, which may on some occasion be brought to bear upon party objects. I should be able less to understand what was the cause of this discontent, if I did not know that peace and prosperity have always a tendency to produce it. We have had peace for some time, and we seem rising fast to prosperity, for I observe the old symptoms of it again,—credit, building, improving, and the increasing luxury of the middling classes."

The elections were scarcely well over when considerable uneasiness began to be spread by the accounts that came from Manchester of the temper and proceedings of a portion of the working classes there. Much dissatisfaction had prevailed for some time among the cotton spinners on the subject of wages; and so early as before the end of June they had struck work to the number of about fifteen thousand. Of course, as days and weeks passed on, and they felt more and more the pressure of diminished resources, while their hopes of attaining their object by peaceable or passive resistance were also dying away, there was the greater danger that they might be tempted to deviate into something illegal. It is probable, also, that from the first, although no satisfactory proofs of combination could be obtained, the usual means of intimidation at least, if not of actual violence, were employed to prevent those who were willing to work from continuing to do so, and to compel them to join the strike. But it appears not to have been till about the beginning of August that the

STRIKE OF MAN-
CHESTER COTTON-
SPINNERS.

1818. authorities considered themselves called upon even to make any preparations in contemplation of a possible breach of the peace. By that time, if not before, the spinners had begun to assemble in processions, which were regarded as being intended to make a formidable display of their numerical strength; and, the Government having been applied to, some troops were ordered to proceed to the town. The magistrates, also, on the 1st of that month, issued a public notice, in which they described the spinners as being in the habit not only of assembling in great numbers and parading the streets, but of besetting particular factories, and forcibly preventing the well-disposed from continuing to work; and intimated their determination to use every exertion to bring to punishment the persons concerned in these proceedings. No collision, however, took place till the 2nd of September, on which day the spinners, having been joined by a large body of others from Stockport, after a procession through the streets as usual, repaired to a factory in Ancoat's Lane, and, it is said, had actually begun to force their way into the building, when some soldiers and police that were stationed in it fired and wounded three of them, one of whom soon after died. A party of dragoons and infantry then arrived and dispersed the mob, which some calculations made to have amounted to not less than 30,000. A coroner's jury that sat upon the body of the man who had been killed brought in a verdict of Justifiable Homicide. This affair appears to have put an end to the disturbances, and even to have broken up the strike. On the 11th Lord Sidmouth, who had gone in the beginning of August to spend a few weeks in the west of England, but had been suddenly recalled to town by the alarming reports received at the Home Office, writes as follows to Lord Ellenborough:—
 “The combination at Manchester is now nearly dissolved, and tranquillity is completely restored. The verdict of the jury in the case of the person killed in the attack on Gray's mill, the arrest of Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond, who are lodged in Chester gaol, the failure of pecuniary supplies, and the admirable arrangements of Sir John Byng, in conjunction with the civil authorities (one of the chief objects of which was to afford protection to all persons disposed to return to their work), have effected this fortunate change.” This affair, indeed, in its origin, and so far as it had actually proceeded, was merely a dispute about wages; but as such it proved at any rate, that all was not gold that glittered in the present show of national prosperity, and that the busy commercial speculation that had sprung up had not prevented the existence of much distress among large classes of the people. Wages, in fact, were not such as to compensate for the high prices of food.

Pellevé's Life of
Lord Sidmouth;
iii. 226.

DEATH OF THE
QUEEN.

Except, however, that meetings for radical reform continued to be held occasionally in London and elsewhere, the tranquillity of the country remained undisturbed for the rest of the year. Almost the only other domestic event of a public or historical character that occurred in the course of the year was the death of the Queen, which took place on the 17th of November. Her Majesty was in her seventy-fifth year, and had been suffering for about three months from dropsy in the chest. The act passed in the last session of Parliament amending the Regency Act prevented this event from having any immediate political consequences. A much more profound sensation was produced by another death which happened about the same time, that of Sir Samuel Romilly, who destroyed himself on the 2nd of November, four days after the

DEATHS OF SIR S.
ROMILLY, &c.

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loss of his wife, in a paroxysm of insanity, brought on by that severe shock falling upon a mind previously weakened and shattered by overburthening professional labours and anxieties. He was sixty-one years of age ; and he had attained the highest position, both in the courts of law and in parliament, which ability and character, without office, could confer. Nor was any man more universally beloved. His late triumphant return for Westminster, where he had been brought in at the head of the poll, without having either spent a shilling or asked a vote, or even once made his appearance on the hustings, was a sufficient testimony to his general popularity, and also, it may be added, to the purity of conduct, and elevation above all popularity-hunting arts, by which, or notwithstanding which, he had acquired it. But the charm of his beautiful nature won its way even where wide difference of political principle and sentiment might have been expected to create some prejudice against him. His death was acutely felt, we are told, by Lord Eldon, before whom he had been for many years in daily and pre-eminent practice. "The Chancellor," it is related, "came into court next morning obviously much affected. As he took his seat he was struck by the sight of the vacant place within the bar which Romilly was accustomed to occupy. His eyes filled with tears. 'I cannot stay here,' he exclaimed ; and, rising in great agitation, broke up his court." Within little more than a month after Romilly, on the 13th of December, died another great lawyer, of equally opposite politics and temper, Lord Ellenborough. This remarkable man, whose talents, so long as he continued in his vigour, were of the most commanding character, seemed never to have recovered from his discomfiture by Hone in the preceding year. We have already quoted the terms in which he wrote to Lord Sidmouth on the day after the last of the three trials and acquittals. The purpose of resignation which he announced in that letter he had carried into effect about three months before his death. He was when he died in his sixty-ninth year, and he had presided in the court of King's Bench since April 1802. In August this same year had died, at the age of eighty-five, Warren Hastings, whose leading counsel Lord Ellenborough, then Mr. Law, had been throughout the five years of his memorable trial before the House of Lords, since the termination of which a quarter of a century had now elapsed. And, remarkably enough, before the year was out, Hastings had been followed to the grave by the most pertinacious and vindictive of his accusers and enemies, Sir Philip Francis. He died at the age of seventy-eight, on one of the last days of December, when there wanted only about a month to make exactly half a century since the appearance of the first of the famous Letters of Junius, of which he has been supposed to be the author.

Twiss's Life of
Lord Eldon ;
ii. 324.

The most important event belonging to the general history of Europe which marks this year is the Congress of the allied Sovereigns held at Aix-la-Chapelle for the purpose of withdrawing the army of occupation from France. Of the 150,000 troops left in that country in 1815, 30,000, of which 6000 were English, had been withdrawn last year ; and, although it had been originally stipulated that the occupation might extend to five years, it had been for some time universally expected and understood that it would be actually put an end to now at the end of three. So much was this the case, that the holding of the Congress was looked upon as little more than going through a necessary form.

CONGRESS OF AIX-
LA-CHAPELLE.

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And, in point of fact, little or nothing of deliberation or discussion appears to have taken place. The Ministers of the several Powers, including the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, as representing his Britannic Majesty, had collected at Aix-la-Chapelle by the 25th of September; the King of Prussia arrived the next day; the Emperors of Austria and Russia on the 28th; two preliminary conferences were held on the 30th and 31st; and at a third, held on the 2nd of October, the evacuation was unanimously agreed upon. An envoy was immediately despatched to Paris, where the news was received on the 5th. A few more conferences were held, to settle the time and manner of the evacuation, and also to determine how much of the pecuniary indemnity of 700 millions of francs, imposed upon France, still remained due. But by the 9th an agreement embracing all points was drawn up in the form of a treaty, and signed by the Ministers of the several powers; and on the 17th the Sovereigns affixed their own signatures. It was settled that the army of occupation should be entirely withdrawn by the 30th of November, or sooner if possible; and the sum remaining to be paid by France was definitively fixed at 265 millions of francs. Afterwards on the representation of the Duke of Richelieu a slight modification was made by another protocol in the arrangements respecting the dates at which the successive instalments of the indemnity should be discharged by France. The removal of whatever apprehensions and objections might have been entertained in any quarter to the decision thus come to by the Allied Sovereigns is understood to have been chiefly due to the efforts of Louis XVIII. and the Duke of Wellington; and the smoothing away of any difficulties that arose after the Congress met is attributed principally to his Grace. "Sufficient justice," writes a recent French historian, "has not generally been done to the Duke of Wellington for the liberal and faithful manner in which he protected the interests of France throughout all the negotiations with foreign powers. . . . The Duke was highly favourable to France in every thing that related to the evacuation of her territory. His position as Generalissimo of the army of occupation gave a great weight to his advice on this question; he was consulted at every step, and his opinion was always given in terms expressive of an elevation of view and sentiment which did honour to his character. . . . With the cessation of the armed occupation, the Duke was to lose a great position in France, that of Generalissimo of the Allied Powers, and one which made him, in some sort, a member of the Government; he was to sacrifice also an appointment of immense pecuniary value; moreover, his Grace knew the personal opinion of Lord Castlereagh, and of a large portion of the English aristocracy, to be that the continuance of the armed occupation was necessary. All these interests did not check him; he was of opinion that this measure of precaution ought to cease, seeing that not only had France duly discharged the stipulated payments, but that her Government appeared to present the character of order and of duration; this opinion was most influential at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle." That town did not exhibit so much splendour and festive gaiety as had been seen four years back at Vienna; but it was still a busy, animated, and brilliant scene. "We never saw so many stars in our life time," somebody wrote from the place in a letter which has been printed; "they appear as numerous at Aix-la-Chapelle as in the firmament;



STILL LIFE

Still Life

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every Sovereign is surrounded with his constellation." Many entertainments were given ; and plenty of dissipation and intrigue of every kind (except, perhaps, political) went on. Numbers of students from the different German universities in their antiquated and grotesque academic dresses divided attention with the Cossacks about the household of the Emperor Alexander. Among the undiplomatic celebrities were Madame Catalani and Sir Thomas Lawrence, the latter sent by the Prince Regent to take the portraits of the Emperors of Austria and Russia and the King of Prussia. Another arrival which excited some curiosity was that of Robert Owen of New Lanark, then in the earliest stage of his unwearied advocacy and agitation of the new scheme of society—not ill described in the letter we have just quoted as "a plan to civilize the lower classes by *parking*, if we may so speak, indigent families in villages, where they would be subjected to a regimen combined of quakerism and jesuitism." Mr. Owen was presented to the Emperor Alexander, and had a long conference on the subject of his benevolent and impracticable theories. But his Imperial Majesty was also, it is said, beset by various philanthropists and regenerators of the other sex, who sought, by means of prophetic ejaculations and an imposing style of attire, to acquire the same influence over his imagination that Madame Krudener had exercised some years before. The anti-slavery party, in England, too, sent Mr. Clarkson to endeavour to bring over Alexander to their views. This was done on the suggestion, or at least by the advice, of Wilberforce, ever watchful for any opportunity of promoting the great object of his life. "Castlereagh will tell you," he wrote to Mr. J. Stephen in August, "and tell you truly, that the Congress will have nothing to do with abolitionism in any form. But my own idea is that the Emperor of Russia may be likely to come forward and befriend a proposal to make the slave-trade piracy, after the abolition of it by Spain and Portugal." He had despaired of bringing over the English Government to his views, "conceiving Castlereagh to be a fish of the cold-blooded kind." "But," he goes on, "you have hit on the bait for him, if he be to be caught at all, by the exhibition of political considerations affecting our own interests, rather than any prospects of general philanthropy—not that he would not recognise these. Now I fear he would dislike our having any agent at Aix-la-Chapelle. I should be rejoiced, indeed, if he would suffer some one to go as his travelling depository of tropical intelligence ; but I have no notion he would, and it could not be done without his consent. It would not be at all proper for you to go, which Macaulay suggested. I fear I could not do it without impropriety. But Clarkson seems formed by Providence for the purpose. . . . He would be regarded as half Quaker, and may do eccentric things with less offence than you or I could. I can truly say I have no suspicion of Castlereagh. It would be most unjust to harbour any such notion after all his pains and efforts. But in his public character he might be unable, without a violation of diplomatic propriety, to do a thing which might be very usefully done by a *nemo* who should apply his lever to the great Alexander." The Emperor, however, we are told, would not be moved. The Congress would do nothing for the abolitionists ; and Mr. Clarkson only obtained from Alexander an audience of an hour and a half, with an assurance that he entirely entered into their views. In fact the Sovereigns had resolved that their present meeting, which they themselves called not a

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Edinburgh
Annual Register,
for 1816 ; part ii,
p. 231.

Capefigue ; l. 480.

Life of Wilber-
force ; v. 2, &c.

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Congress but simply a *r union*, should be devoted to the question of the evacuation of France exclusively; and it had been distinctly announced before they met that no other business would be taken up. The question of the Slave Trade, nevertheless, was entered upon at some of the conferences, and formed the subject of some correspondence after the Sovereigns separated. They remained together till the middle of November; on the 15th of which month was signed their last document, a Declaration, as it was entitled, in which they referred to the treaty or convention of the 9th of October as the accomplishment of the work of peace and the completion of the political system destined to ensure its solidity, and, having described their union as not tending to any new political combination, to any change in the relations sanctioned by existing treaties, but having no other object than the maintenance of peace, went on to profess its fundamental basis to be their invariable resolution never to depart, either among themselves or in their relations with other states, from the strictest observance of the principles of the rights of nations, and concluded by avowing their solemn conviction that their duties towards God, and the peoples whom they governed, made it peremptory on them to give to the world, as far as in their power, an example of justice, of concord, of moderation; happy in the power of consecrating, from henceforth, all their efforts to the protection of the arts of peace, to the increase of the internal prosperity of their states, and to the awakening of those sentiments of religion and morality, whose empire had been but too much enfeebled by the misfortunes of the times. Long before this the several divisions of the army of occupation were on their march each to its own country. The time fixed for the evacuation had been anticipated by about a month, and the troops had been reviewed for the last time by the Duke of Wellington at Sedan before the end of October, in the presence of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, who then paid a flying visit to Louis XVIII. at Paris. The Duke took leave of the troops which he had commanded for three years in an Order of the day dated from the headquarters at Cambray on the 7th of November, in which he expressed his gratitude for the good conduct which had distinguished them during the time they had been under his orders, and the regret with which he had seen the moment arrive which was to put an end to his public connexion and private relations with the officers, and begged the generals commanding-in-chief to receive and make known to the men under their orders the assurance that he should never cease to take the most lively interest in every thing that might concern them, and that the remembrance of the three years during which he had had the honour to be at their head would be always dear to him. Our illustrious countryman was made during the Congress a Field Marshal in the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian services, and also a Grand Cordon (or Knight of the First Class) of the French Order of the Holy Ghost. Even in matters of ceremonial the great captain almost took rank with the crowned heads; and in real importance and personal ascendancy he was the first figure there. After his return to England his Grace was appointed in the end of December Master-General of the Ordnance, with a seat in the Cabinet.

CONDITION OF THE
COUNTRY AT
CLOSE OF 1818.

The economical condition of the country still continued at the close of the year to present much the same superficial appearance which it had done for

some time preceding : but the elastic spirit which had existed a twelvemonth ago had long been palpably on the decay, and was now quite gone. The harvest had turned out upon the whole better than had been expected. Oats, barley, beans, and peas, indeed, proved very unproductive ; but the wheat crop was of average quantity. Grass, turnips, and potatoes, which had all been almost given up, made a sudden recovery in the first week of September, when some rain at last fell after the long drought. The consequence was, that, although the prices of all other kinds of agricultural produce used as human food rose, and were much higher at the end of this year than they had been at the end of the last, wheat had considerably fallen in price. Oats, for instance, which had been at 45*s.* 11*d.* the quarter in December, 1817, were now at 63*s.* 6*d.* ; but wheat, which had been then at 85*s.* 4*d.*, had now declined to 78*s.* 10*d.* Still this might be considered as a scarcity price. Nor had the prices of the other commodities of which speculation had brought in the largest supplies yet much given way. "It is well known," as Mr. Tooke observes, "that the resistance to a change, whether from a low to a high, or from a high to a low range of prices, is at first very considerable, and that there is generally a pause of greater or less duration before the turn becomes manifest ; in the interval, while sales are difficult or impracticable, unless at a difference in price, which the buyer in the one case, and the seller in the other, are not yet prepared to submit to, the quotations are regulated by the last transactions, but are said to be, and are in fact, nominal. A struggle of this kind prevailed more or less, according as the articles were in greater or less abundance through the autumn, and into the winter of 1818-19, when many articles which had become unsaleable from excess were still quoted at nearly as high prices as they had attained at any time in 1818." But the excessive importation, which had not yet much brought down prices, was already bringing down many of the importers and those connected with them ; and the year closed in the midst of numerous and extensive bankruptcies.

The Reform spirit, too, was spreading and rising again among the people, as they began to feel the pressure of the commercial stagnation in diminished employment, and a tendency to decline in wages. But, as has been already stated, meetings for Reform had continued to be held from the commencement of the year, both in the metropolis and in the manufacturing districts. One which was held—in the latter part of the year, as we gather—at Birch, near Middleton, where he lived, is noted by Bamford for the following incident :— "It was moved and seconded that petitions to the Lords and Commons should be presented in the usual manner ; when William Benbow, who had lately returned from prison, made his way through the crowd, and, mounting the waggon, urged the people, in a violent and irrational address, to march to London, and 'present their petitions at the point of the sword and pike.' He was loudly cheered, with expressions such as, 'Ay, that's the way,'—'Go on, Benbow,'—'That's the man for us.' At that same time he was pondering on a retreat from the country ; that country which he was endeavouring to distract by a course of violence. That very week, or the week following, he sailed from Liverpool to join Cobbett in America.—When I afterwards met some of his applauders, and asked them what they thought of the man who could urge them to rush on destruction, and then hasten out of the way, they

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Tooke, Hist. of
Prices ; ii. 21. &c.

1d. p. 62.

REVIVAL OF THE
REFORM AGITA-
TION.

Life of a Radical ;
ii. 167.

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shook with indignation." This may show that all the violent counsels which were addressed to the people did not proceed from the Government spies; some of their leaders were no doubt the advisers of as extreme and insane courses as any recommended by Castles or Oliver.

Life of a Radical;
i. 165.

Another meeting at Lydgate, in Saddleworth, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which appears to have taken place earlier in the year, is remarkable for the introduction of an innovation, of which Bamford was himself the originator. In a speech which he made, he proposed that his female auditors should take part with the men in the show of hands when the resolution was put to the vote, vindicating their claim to be allowed to do so on grounds both of right and expediency. "This," says he, "was a new idea; and the women, who attended numerously on that bleak ridge, were mightily pleased with it; and the men being nothing dissentient, when the resolution was put the women held up their hands, amid much laughter; and ever from that time females voted with the men at the Radical meetings." He adds, that the new impulse thus given to the Radical movement was not only soon after copied at meetings for charitable and religious purposes, but was ere long carried much beyond what had been at first contemplated, and brought about the formation of female political unions, with their committee women, chairwomen, and other officials. Bamford, we suppose from all this, would have had the franchise extended to women. In curious contrast to his radicalism here is the following passage which we find in one of Cobbett's Registers of almost this very date; it occurs in a Letter to Major Cartwright, written from the United States in September, principally in abuse of the toasts and speeches at Sir Francis Burdett's election dinner:—"Another curious thing took place at this dinner; the toast of 'Jeremy Bentham, Esq., the unanswerable advocate of the rights of the people.' I wonder who the Baronet and his Rump will find out next! what unknown creature they will bring forth! There is no danger, you see, from Mr. Bentham; no danger that he will become the rival, or foil, of the Baronet. It is safe to toast and praise *him*. Little care is taken to preserve consistency; for Mr. Bentham, if he can, with his quaint and unintelligible language and mode of stating and of reasoning, be called the advocate of anything, is the advocate of Universal Suffrage,* which he would extend even to women, *and which, by such extension, he would, if he were attended to, render ridiculous.*" And then Bentham, his speculations, and his admirers, are kicked out of the way, in the most summary and contemptuous style:—"There is one thing which makes Mr. Bentham a favourite with this little band of feeble and ambitious men; indeed there are two things: he cannot be a rival; and he would, if he could, hurt Mr. Hunt and me. He shows his teeth; but he has not dared to bite. He would have done it, if he had dared. But, indeed, he ran no risk: for very few, comparatively speaking, buy his book; and those who do never read it half through. It is a *corvée* to read it. It is not only bombast, but quaint bombast, and puzzling and tedious beyond mortal endurance. . . . The book is wholly inefficient. . . . A very fit and proper person, this, to be toasted by the Baronet and his Rump!"

* At this time Burdett had given up *Universal Suffrage* for what he called *General Suffrage*.

CHAPTER XV.

THE series of bankruptcies which had commenced in the latter part of the year 1818 continued throughout the first months of 1819. "The largest," says the Historian of Prices, "in point of amount of the articles of which there was so great an excess of the importation was cotton; and it was in this article that the fall in price was the greatest, and the failures among those concerned in it, consequently, the most extensive. The error usual on such occasions had been committed; the stocks on the spot had been, as we have seen, greatly reduced in 1816, and a rise of price of this reduced stock was perfectly justified; but then, as in more recent instances, the advanced price was not confined to the small stocks on the spot, but was paid for large quantities in the countries of growth, to be shipped hither." The result, he goes on to state, was, that "importers, speculators, and manufacturers were successively ruined by having embarked too largely upon the anticipation of the maintenance of the former range of high prices. There were also very extensive failures in New York, but more especially in Charlestown, and other southern ports of the United States, at the close of 1818, and at the commencement of 1819." This state of commercial pressure and distress could not but make itself be felt to some extent by the manufacturing population. It may not have gone the length of throwing any considerable number of them out of employment; but it could not fail to affect the labour market, and to reduce still farther the rate of wages, already inadequate to counterbalance the continued high price of provisions.

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STATE OF THE
COUNTRY.Tooke's Hist. of
Prices; ii. 77.

The large importations and eager speculation which had gone on for the greater part of the past year, however, had had the effect of swelling the revenue, and giving a semblance of extraordinary prosperity to the national finances. This circumstance, which had the advantage of admitting of distinct and palpable exhibition in figures, enabled Ministers to meet the new Parliament with much complacency.

The Houses assembled on the 14th of January, but the first week was consumed in swearing the members of the House of Commons, and in the reelection of Mr. Manners Sutton to the chair of that House, in which he was replaced by acclamation. The session was opened by commission on the 21st, when the Regent's Speech was read by the Lord Chancellor. In noticing the death of the Queen it directed the attention of the legislature to the consideration of such measures as that event had rendered necessary for the care of His Majesty's person. It then mentioned the late negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, and announced that a treaty had been concluded with the United States for the renewal, for a further term of years, of the Commercial Convention subsisting between the two nations, and for the amicable adjustment of several points of mutual importance to the interests of both countries. An assurance

OPENING OF
PARLIAMENT

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was expressed that, when the estimates for the current year should be laid before the Commons, they would learn with satisfaction the extent of reduction which the present situation of Europe, and the circumstances of the British empire, had allowed to be made in our naval and military establishments. At the same time they were informed that a considerable and progressive improvement would be found to have taken place in the most important branches of the revenue. The military operations of the Marquess of Hastings against the Pindaries in the East Indies, the news of the successful completion of which had been received since Parliament last rose, were dwelt upon with merited congratulation and eulogy. Lastly, his Royal Highness declared that he had the greatest pleasure in informing Parliament that the trade, commerce, and manufactures of the country were in a most flourishing condition; and he observed that the favourable change which had so rapidly taken place in the internal circumstances of the United Kingdom afforded the strongest proof of the solidity of its resources.

CARE OF HIS
MAJESTY'S
PERSON.

The Address was voted in both Houses without any amendment being moved, and after little debate. The first question that tried the temper of the new Parliament was that of the new arrangements to be made for the care of the person of His Majesty in consequence of the death of the Queen. On the 25th of January a bill was introduced in the Lords by Lord Liverpool appointing the Duke of York as the successor to Her Majesty. Some objections were made by the Opposition to the amount of patronage to be vested in his Royal Highness; but no resistance of moment was offered to this bill in either House. Another by which it was followed, the Royal Household or Windsor Establishment Bill, had not so smooth a passage. This measure was heralded by a message from the Regent, brought down on the 4th of February, acquainting Parliament that his Royal Highness placed at its disposal the 58,000*l.* per annum which had by the demise of Her Majesty become disposable by him for the general purposes of the Civil List, only recommending the claims of certain members of Her Majesty's late establishment to the justice and liberality of the House of Commons. On the same day Lord Castlereagh, after a speech in explanation of the intentions of the Government, moved and obtained the appointment of a select committee to take into consideration the whole subject of this 58,000*l.*, and of another sum of 100,000*l.*, which had been appropriated to the maintenance of the establishment at Windsor, and the distribution of which also it was now thought necessary or expedient to modify. It was agreed that, after the select committee had made its Report, the subject should be taken up and further considered by a committee of the whole House. Meanwhile it was intimated that Ministers would propose the assignment of 25,000*l.* of the income of the late Queen to be bestowed in annuities upon Her Majesty's servants; and the reduction of the yearly expense of the Windsor establishment to 50,000*l.* The entire immediate saving, therefore, would be 83,000*l.*, which would ultimately become 108,000*l.*, when all the annuities should have fallen in. But there was, besides, a sum of 10,000*l.*, which the Queen had enjoyed as Custos of His Majesty's person; it was intended that the same salary should be continued to the Duke of York. This was the clause of the ministerial scheme which it was well known would prove of most difficult digestion with Parliament. Accordingly, on the 22nd, when

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the Commons resolved themselves into a Committee of the whole House on the Report of the select committee, it was about the Duke's salary that the battle was chiefly waged. When the new arrangements were first proposed, Tierney had objected in strong terms to the 50,000*l.* allowed for the Windsor establishment. He could not conceive, he said, how this sum was to be expended. " Fifty thousand pounds for the establishment at Windsor, for the support of His Majesty in his present unhappy state ! To whom, and for what particular use connected with the due and dignified support of the King, was this sum to be given ? His Majesty, it was too well known, was incapable of even ordinary enjoyments. He could not, if he were rightly informed, speak or be spoken to ; and indeed the necessary measures which were taken for the preservation of his health, and, if possible, the cure of his malady, rendered such a seclusion from conversation absolutely essential. His regimen was, from the same cause, so very plain, that the tenth of 50,000*l.* would be more than sufficient to supply it, with all the necessary forms of attendance." Upon this head, however, the Right Honourable Gentleman, who had been a member of the Select Committee, had seen reason to alter his opinion. He now confirmed Castlereagh's statement, that the Report of the Committee, which in regard to the Windsor establishment, and the allowances to her late Majesty's servants, coincided with the recommendations of the Government, had been agreed to with perfect unanimity. He had thought the 50,000*l.* too great ; but when he had heard it stated in the Committee, by competent witnesses, that, even if it were not to be inhabited by His Majesty, the necessary charge of maintaining Windsor Castle would amount to eighteen or twenty thousand a-year, he could not think that the remaining 30,000*l.* was too much for the royal establishment. Passing lightly over every thing else, he now directed the main force of his argument upon the question—the great constitutional question, as he called it—out of what fund the guardian of the King's person was to be remunerated ? Castlereagh, in the speech with which he opened the debate, had used strong language. He had said that, if the proposition which it was understood was to be brought forward from the other side of the House should be carried, it would, he believed in his conscience, consign the names of the members of the new Parliament to infamy in the estimation of the country. Undismayed by this menace, Tierney moved his amendment, to the effect that the expense attending the care of His Majesty's person should be defrayed out of the privy purse, or the other private funds of the Crown. Let the country, he said, look at the various sums which had been voted to the Royal Family since 1811. The Prince Regent, besides 50,000*l.* a-year set apart for the payment of his debts, had then a privy purse of 60,000*l.* a-year, to which an addition of 10,000*l.* a-year had since been made. The King had also a privy purse of 60,000*l.* a-year, with an additional revenue from the Duchy of Lancaster of more than 10,000*l.* There was thus a private property belonging to the Crown of 140,000*l.* a-year ; and surely it was not too much to say that out of this large sum should be defrayed the expense of taking care of the King's person. The task of answering Tierney's speech was undertaken by Mr. Peel, at this time Secretary for Ireland. He relied principally upon the determination expressed by the Duke of York to accept of no salary which should come from the privy purse, and upon the sacredness and inviolability

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which had hitherto been held to attach to that fund. When he mentioned Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Adam (now become Lord Chief Commissioner of the Scotch Jury Court) as two eminent Whig authorities who had been accustomed to preach this doctrine about the privy purse in its highest strain, the House, or at least the Opposition, testified by loud derisive cheers how it was disposed to account for the high monarchic principles on this point entertained or professed by these personal friends of the Prince of Wales. Mr. Peel, however, dexterously chose to understand the manifestation in a somewhat different sense. "If," he exclaimed, "what I have heard from the other side be meant as a cheer of derision at the name of Mr. Sheridan, I must say that I could not expect such an expression towards an individual who was one of the most able supporters the party from which it proceeded ever had the honour to possess, while he was, by universal confession, one of the greatest ornaments of whom that House and the British empire ever had reason to be proud." The rest of the debate on the same side was principally sustained by other members of the Government, by Mr. Huskisson, who held the office of Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and by Sir Samuel Shepherd and Sir Robert Gifford, the Attorney and Solicitor-General; the amendment was supported by a crowd of speakers, among whom the most conspicuous was Mr. Scarlett (the late Lord Abinger); some of the more ardent of the Opposition orators seem to have expected that their logic and rhetoric would prove triumphant that night over all the influences of power; but, when the vote was at last taken, the numbers were found to be 281 for Ministers against 186, so that Tierney's proposition was negatived by a majority of 95. Wilberforce, who voted with the Opposition, describes this as the best debate he had witnessed for a long time. "Castlereagh, Tierney, Peel, Bankes, Solicitor-General, Scarlett," he says, "all did well." And he adds, "I had really the plan of a good and very telling speech, from its taking up some of Peel's points, but, partly from my distress about Castlereagh, I came away without speaking." He was afraid that he had pained Castlereagh by some expressions in a speech a few days before. Another animated debate, distinguished by the mingled eloquence of Denman, Canning, and Brougham, took place on the 25th, when the resolution for giving the Duke of York the 10,000*l.* a-year was reported from the Committee, and was carried by the still larger majority of 247 to 137. The discussion in the Lords was taken in Committee, when Lord Grey in a long speech proposed the omission of the clause in the bill relating to the Duke's salary; he was supported by Lord Lansdowne and other peers; but the amendment was not pressed to a division.

Diary, in Life;
v. 13.

RESUMPTION OF
CASH PAYMENTS.

The most important legislative act of the session was the arrangement made for the resumption of Cash Payments by the Bank. This question, in its various branches, gave rise to about fifty debates and conversations in the two Houses, the reports of which cover between four and five hundred long columns in Hansard; we can only rapidly indicate the course and the results of the discussion. Very soon after Parliament met Secret Committees were, on the motion of Ministers, appointed in both Houses to inquire into the state of the Bank. Lists, of course, were, as usual, supplied to their adherents by the Government, and the ballot, accordingly, returned a large preponderance

of ministerial members for each Committee; it appears, indeed, that, in the Commons, the Opposition declined taking any part in the process of nomination; nevertheless, a few days afterwards, Mr. Calcraft moved that the name of Mr. Brougham should be added to the Committee, and when a division took place, after a short debate, the motion was supported by the large minority of 133 votes against 175—a result which, we are told, was received by the Opposition with a loud cheer. It was asserted in the course of the debate that of the twenty-one members of the Committee, as appointed by the ballot, fourteen were ministerialists. In the beginning of April both Committees presented short Reports, recommending that, in order to facilitate the final and complete restoration of Cash Payments, a bill should be forthwith passed prohibiting the continuance of the payment in gold by the Bank of its notes issued previous to the 1st of January, 1817, according to its public notices of that and the preceding year. It appears that between six and seven millions in gold had already been paid by the Bank in the fulfilment of these voluntary engagements. “The issue of that treasure,” Mr. Peel observed in moving for leave to bring in the bill, “had not been attended with any good to the nation; and he thought, indeed, it might have been foreseen, that, unless this issue had been accompanied by a simultaneous reduction of the number of Bank notes, the gold would find its way to those places where there was a greater demand for it. There was little doubt at present as to the place of its destination; for, by a Report of the Minister of Finance in France, it appeared, that, within the first six months of the last year, 125,000,000 of francs had been coined at the French mint, three-fourths of which, it was understood, had been derived from the gold coin of this realm. The Opposition expressed some dissatisfaction; but the proposed bill was immediately brought in, and passed with all possible expedition through both Houses. It prohibited the continuance of the Cash Payments under the notices till the end of the current session. Much more elaborate Reports, embracing the whole extent of the subject, were presented by the two Committees about a month later. These expositions represented the condition of the Bank as eminently flourishing. Its liabilities, it was stated, amounted on the 30th of January, 1819, to 33,894,580*l.*; and its assets in Government securities and other credits to 39,096,900*l.*, exclusive of the permanent debt of 14,686,800*l.* due from the Government, and repayable on the expiration of the charter. The entire surplus in favour of the Bank, therefore, was 19,899,120*l.*; and what might be called its immediate available surplus 5,202,320*l.* The bullion in its coffers, also, which had been very much reduced at the close of the war, had gone on increasing from July, 1815, to October, 1817, at which date it was much greater than it had ever before been since the establishment of the Bank, although it had again been brought down by the payments that had since taken place. The Committees, under the direction of the Government, which was so influentially represented in each, agreed in recommending a plan for the resumption of Cash Payments, which was first embodied in a series of resolutions, and in that form submitted to the two Houses. It was founded upon the principle first announced by Mr. Ricardo in 1816, in his “Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency,” that the Bank should be bound to exchange its notes, not for coin, but for gold ingots, the fineness

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Hansard's
Debates; XXXIX.
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of which should be attested by a stamp, and only in quantities above a certain weight, at a rate to be diminished from time to time until it should have descended to the Mint price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce. But, although this principle was adopted as the basis of the plan, the complete exchangeability of Bank notes for cash was provided for as its ultimate result. The resolutions were first moved in the Lords on the 21st of May by Lord Harrowby, the President of the Council, who had officiated as Chairman of their Lordships' Committee. A series of counter-resolutions moved by Lord Lauderdale, although they met with no support even from his own side of the House, gave occasion to a debate, which was principally sustained by his Lordship and Lords Liverpool and Grenville; the Government plan received the approbation not only of Grenville, but also of Lords King and Lansdowne; Lauderdale's resolutions were negatived without a division, and those moved by Lord Harrowby were agreed to. The subject was much more fully discussed in the Commons, where the ministerial resolutions were proposed on the 24th by Mr. Peel in an elaborate and remarkable speech. Mr. Peel had been the Chairman of the Secret Committee; the Report of the Committee was probably of his drawing up, and the Government plan was understood to have been arranged and put together by him; but not only was he not the originator of its leading principle, it would appear from his own statement that neither he himself nor the Government had been prepared for the adoption of such a plan when the Committee was appointed and the subject was first brought forward. He began his speech by frankly announcing that, in consequence of the evidence which had been received by the Committee, and the divisions which had arisen upon it, his opinions had undergone a very material change. "He was ready to avow, without shame or remorse, that he went into the Committee with a very different opinion from that which he at present entertained; for his views of the subject were most materially different when he voted against the resolutions brought forward in 1811 by Mr. Horner, as the Chairman of the Bullion Committee. Having gone into the inquiry, determined to dismiss all former impressions that he might have received, and to obliterate from his memory the vote which he had given some years since when the same question was discussed, he had resolved to apply to it his undivided and unprejudiced attention, and adopt every inference that authentic information or mature reflection should offer to his mind; and he had no hesitation in stating, that, although he should probably even now vote, if it were again brought before the House, in opposition to the practical measure then recommended [the resumption of Cash Payments by the Bank after two years], he now with very little modification concurred in the principles laid down in the fourteen first resolutions submitted to the House by that very able and much-lamented individual. He conceived them to represent the true nature and laws of our monetary system." In the conclusion of his speech he adverted to another personal matter. Among other difficulties, he observed, which presented themselves to him in the discussion of this question, was one which gave him great pain; "and that was the necessity he felt of opposing himself to an authority [that of his father, Sir Robert Peel] to which he always had bowed, and he hoped always should bow, with deference; but here he had a great public duty imposed upon him, and from that duty he

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would not shrink, whatever might be his private feelings." Thus, in the first of the three great measures with which his name is associated, as well as in the other two, Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, it was the fate of this distinguished statesman to surprise the public by suddenly appearing as the chief figure in what we may call the triumph of the principles which up to that moment he had spent his life in opposing. Various modifications of the government plan in some particulars were proposed by Mr. Edward Ellis, Mr. Cripps, and other members, and the debate was kept up for two evenings; but the original resolutions were in the end agreed to without a division. Although opposed by Tierney, they were supported not only by Ricardo, who had been returned to this parliament for the Irish borough of Portarlington, and who, although not appointed to sit on the Secret Committee, had been examined before it at great length, but by Sir Henry Parnell, Mr. Abercromby (the present Lord Dunfermline), and other members of the Opposition. The resolutions, as reported by the Committee of the whole House, were to the following effect:—That it was expedient that the restriction on payments in cash by the Bank should be continued beyond the time fixed by law (the 5th of July, 1819); that a definite period should be fixed for the termination of the restriction, and that in the mean time certain preparatory measures should be taken; that provision should be made for the gradual repayment to the Bank of £10,000,000 of its advances for the public service; that from the 1st of February, 1820, the Bank should be obliged to give in exchange for its notes gold, assayed and stamped, in quantities of not less than sixty ounces, at the rate of 81s. per ounce; that from the 1st of October, 1820, it should be obliged to pay gold for its notes in the same manner, at the rate of 79s. 6d. per ounce; that after the 1st of May, 1821, the rate should be 77s. 10½d. per ounce; that from the 1st of May, 1823, the Bank should pay its notes on demand in the legal coin of the realm; and that the laws prohibiting the melting and exportation of the coin should be repealed. Bills embodying these resolutions were afterwards brought in by Mr. Peel and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and encountered scarcely any opposition in their passage through either House. The only alteration of any importance made in the original arrangement was the substitution of the 1st of May, 1822, for the 1st of May, 1821, as the date at which the Bank should be obliged to begin paying gold for its notes at the Mint price. This amendment was introduced in the Lords on the motion of Lord Harrowby, and was agreed to by the Commons. The Bank, however, we may here mention, did not avail itself either of this postponement, or even of the liberty to refuse payment in gold of any demands under £233 12s. 6d. (the value of sixty ounces), but on the 1st of May, 1821, commenced giving cash in exchange for its notes of whatever amount.

A few days after the Secret Committees on the Bank had been nominated, Lord Castlereagh, in the Commons, proposed the appointment of a Select Committee for inquiring into the National Income and Expenditure, to consist of the same twenty-one members who had formed the Finance Committee of the last parliament, except that two new names were substituted for those of Sir Thomas Acland and Mr. J. P. Grant, who were not now in the House. In the speech with which he prefaced his motion, Castlereagh went into almost as much detail as if he had been opening the Budget, and a debate was

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brought on ; but no objection was made to the appointment of the Committee. The Committee presented an elaborate Report in the beginning of April ; and on the 3rd of June, in a Committee of the whole House, the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid on the table a series of Resolutions founded on this Report, and presenting an outline of the proposed financial arrangements for the year. They began by affirming that the reduction of taxation since 1815 had been upwards of £18,000,000 per annum, and that, when the revenues of Great Britain and Ireland had been consolidated in 1816, the mere interest upon the debt of Ireland, including the sinking fund applicable to its reduction, had exceeded the entire net revenue of that country by nearly £1,900,000, “without affording any provision for the civil list, and other permanent charges, or for the proportion of supplies to be defrayed by that part of the United Kingdom ;” it was then stated that the supplies required to be voted for the present year would be £20,500,000 ;—that the portion of such supplies which might be provided by the continuance of the existing revenue could not be estimated at more than £7,000,000 ; leaving the sum of £13,500,000 to be raised by loan or other extraordinary resource ;—that the Sinking Fund might be estimated at £15,500,000 ; exceeding the sum necessary to be raised for the service of the year by about £2,000,000 only ; and the concluding resolution was as follows :—“That, to provide for the exigencies of the public service, to make such progressive reduction of the national debt as may adequately support public credit, and to afford to the country a prospect of future relief from a part of its present burdens, it is absolutely necessary that there should be a clear surplus of the income of the country, beyond the expenditure, of not less than £5,000,000 ; and that, with a view to the attainment of this important object, it is expedient now to increase the income of the country by the imposition of taxes to the amount of £3,000,000 per annum.” The debate on these Resolutions was taken on the 7th, when the additional taxation was strongly opposed, and the previous question was moved as an amendment on that part of the ministerial scheme ; but on a division the Resolutions were carried by a majority of 329 against 132. The new taxes, it was now announced, would be raised on malt, tobacco, coffee, and cocoa, tea, British spirits, pepper, and foreign wool. The Budget was opened by Mr. Vansittart on the 9th, when several more divisions took place, but all the ministerial propositions were carried by large majorities. The Supplies voted in the course of the session were :—for the Army, £8,900,000 ; for the Navy, £6,436,000 ; for the Ordnance, £1,191,000 ; Miscellaneous, £1,950,000 ; Interest and Sinking Fund on Exchequer Bills, £2,000,000 ; Repayment of Advances from the Bank, £5,000,000 ; Reduction of other Unfunded Debt, £5,597,000 ; making in all £31,074,000 (exclusive of the interest upon the Funded Debt and of the Sinking Fund, which together amounted to nearly £45,000,000 more, and were provided for by permanent taxes). Of the £31,074,000, it was calculated that the annual malt tax (£3,000,000), the annual or temporary excise duties continued (£3,500,000), a lottery (yielding £240,000), and the sale of old stores would produce £7,074,000 ; the remaining £24,000,000 was to be provided for by two loans of £12,000,000 each, the one derived from the Sinking Fund, the other raised by contract. The effect of the first of these borrowing operations would simply be to reduce the Sinking

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Fund for the present year to 3,500,000*l.*; that of the other, taken in conjunction with the repayment of the Bank advances and of the remaining unfunded debt that was to be paid off, would be (disregarding the speculative advantages that might accrue either to the Government or the subscribers from the terms of the loan) to add 1,403,000*l.* to the amount of the entire debt. On the whole, therefore, the debt would be reduced by these operations to the extent of somewhat more than 2,000,000*l.*; and with the aid of the new taxes, the reduction might be expected to be above 5,000,000*l.* Nominally, however, the new stock created for the two loans of 24,000,000*l.* was 32,304,000*l.* We may notice under the present head a motion made by Mr. Tierney on the 18th of May, that the House would resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to take into consideration the State of the Nation, which, after producing one of the longest debates of the session, was negatived by a majority of more than two to one (357 against 178); and a series of forty-seven resolutions in favour of retrenchment, which were moved by Sir Henry Parnell on the 1st of July, and which were disposed of, after a very short debate, on the 12th, by the farther consideration of them being adjourned till that day three months.

Not much more of the legislation of the session was of any historic importance. Mr. Sturges Bourne obtained the appointment of a new Committee on the Poor Laws; and his bill for the general amendment of these laws, which had been lost in the last session, was revived and passed. An act was also passed to amend the laws respecting the settlement of the poor so far as regards renting tenements. But a more comprehensive measure, the object of which was to amend the law of settlement generally, was lost in the Commons; as was another, to prevent the misapplication of the rates, on the second reading in the Lords. A bill was passed for the regulation of cotton factories, and the better preservation of the health of young persons employed in them by limiting the hours of labour. An extension of the Charitable Foundations Act of the last session was proposed and carried through the two Houses under the auspices of the Government; the motion for leave to bring in the bill was made by Lord Castlereagh, and seconded by Mr. Brougham. It was nearly the same with the bill of last session as originally introduced and as passed by the Commons, embracing charitable foundations of all descriptions as well as those connected with the education of the poor. Not only charities supported by private subscription, however, but all institutions having special visitors were excepted; and when Mr. Brougham moved the omission of the latter exemption, the amendment was negatived by a majority of 107 against 75. Early in the session petitions complaining of the state of the Criminal Law were presented to both Houses from the Common Council of the city of London; and on the 2nd of March, Sir James Mackintosh, stepping into the space left vacant by the lamented Romilly, moved, in an elaborate address, that a Select Committee should be appointed to consider of so much of that law as related to capital punishments in felonies. The motion was opposed by Ministers, but, after a debate of some length, it was carried by a majority of 147 against 128, a result which was received with repeated cheers. A Report from the Committee thus appointed was presented on the 6th of July; and, after another eloquent speech from Mackintosh, was ordered

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to be printed. Committees were also appointed in both Houses, on the proposition of the Government, to inquire into the state of Gaols and other places of confinement, "and into the best method of providing for the reformation, as well as the safe custody and punishment of offenders." A Report, it may be also mentioned, from the Commissioners appointed the preceding year for inquiring into the means of preventing the forgery of Bank Notes was presented by command of the Prince Regent as soon as Parliament met. But the only reforms of the criminal law of any importance that were enacted during the present session were, the repeal of certain Scotch statutes, according to which a person sending or bearing a challenge to fight a duel forfeited all his moveable property, and suffered banishment, whether the duel took place or not; and the abolition of the old and barbarous right of Trial by Battle, and of Appeals of Murder, Felony, or Mayhem. The latter innovation, however, suggested by a case in which an appeal of murder had taken place in the preceding year and the trial by, or wager of, battle had been demanded by the appellee, was not effected without some opposition. Nobody stood up for the trial by battle either in appeals or in writs of right, but it was maintained that the appeal of murder was a great constitutional right which ought not to be taken away. The Common Council of the city of London petitioned that Parliament would not deprive the people of their ancient and undoubted right of appeal in criminal cases; but an amendment, moved by Sir Francis Burdett with a view of attaining the object of this prayer, was, on a division in the Commons, supported only by four votes against eighty-six. Nor was another attempt, made at a subsequent stage to preserve the appeal by Sir Robert Wilson, more successful. Another ministerial measure was much more obstinately and vigorously resisted—what was called the Foreign Enlistment Bill. Even on the motion of the Attorney-General for leave to bring in the bill the gallery was cleared for a division, though none took place. The second reading was only carried by the narrow majority of 155 votes against 142. Another debate arose on the motion for going into committee, which was made memorable by declamations of extraordinary eloquence from Mackintosh on the one side and Canning on the other. The third reading gave rise to another animated discussion, followed by a division, in which the numbers were, Ayes 190, Noes 129. In the Lords, also, the bill encountered the keenest opposition; an amendment moved on the question of its committal was, after a debate of some length, supported by 47 votes against 100. The object of the Act was sufficiently declared by its title, which was "To prevent the enlisting or engagement of His Majesty's subjects to serve in foreign service, and the fitting out or equipping in His Majesty's dominions vessels for warlike purposes, without His Majesty's license." The main ground of objection to it was its bearing upon the contest which Spain was still carrying on in South America; great numbers of Englishmen were now in the service of the several states there which had declared or made good their independence; and the present measure was looked upon as being in effect and substantially a blow aimed at those young communities yet struggling to achieve or to complete their emancipation, and a quite uncalled-for helping-hand held out to their old oppressor in its vain attempt to crush them. Finally, among the acts passed this session were, one to carry into effect a treaty recently con-

cluded with the Netherlands for the suppression of the Slave Trade, another to amend the act of the last session for carrying into execution the convention with Portugal on the same subject, and another to carry into effect certain commercial arrangements which had been made with Portugal and with the United States.

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OTHER QUESTIONS
DISCUSSED.

On the 1st of July, within a few days of the end of the session, Sir Francis Burdett, for the eighteenth time, made his annual motion on the question of Parliamentary Reform. All that he now proposed, however, was, that the House should pledge itself to take the state of the representation into its most serious consideration early in the next session of parliament. The motion was seconded by Mr. George Lamb (younger brother of the late Lord Melbourne);* but neither he nor any other speaker who supported it professed to go along with the mover in the peculiar kind of reform which he advocated. Next to Sir Francis's own long and rambling oration, the most prominent speech of the evening was one delivered by Alderman Waithman. Some of the opinions that were expressed in various quarters are curious enough when read by the light of subsequent events. All the length, for instance, that Mr. Hume went on this occasion was to observe that the majority of the people of Scotland were favourable to a moderate reform, and that he should vote for the motion in compliance with the opinion of his constituents. Lord John Russell, again, though admitting the propriety of disfranchising such boroughs as were notoriously corrupt, and of restricting the duration of parliament to three years, could not support a motion "that went the length of proposing an inquiry into the general state of the representation, because such an inquiry was calculated to throw a slur upon the representation of the country, and to fill the minds of the people with vague and indefinite alarms." On the division, however, 58 members voted with Sir Francis, against 153. More success attended Lord Archibald Hamilton's efforts in the cause of Scotch Burgh Reform. This question formed the subject of two of the most exciting contests of the session. The election of magistrates for the burgh of Aberdeen in 1817 had been declared illegal by the Court of Session, in the same manner as the Montrose election of the year preceding had been; but in this case the Crown, when applied to for a warrant to enable a new election to take place (the burgh had not been found to be disfranchised, as Montrose was), had granted one to the old magistrates to elect their successors as usual, in the face of a petition numerously signed from the burgesses that, as it seems had been usual in similar circumstances, the election should be by poll of the burgesses generally. Lord Archibald, on the 1st of April, moved an Address to the Prince Regent for a copy of this warrant; the motion was strenuously resisted by Ministers, through their organ the Lord-Advocate; but the vote, announced amid the cheers of the minority, was not a triumphant one for the learned lord, his majority being only one of five in a House of

* Mr. Lamb had been returned for Westminster on the vacancy occasioned by the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, after a contest which lasted from the 13th of February till the 3rd of March, and which was distinguished throughout by the most violent proceedings on the part of the mob. His (then Radical) opponent was the present Sir (then Mr.) J. C. Hobhouse; and the numbers at the close of the poll were, for Lamb 4465, for Hobhouse 3861. 58 votes were also given for Major Cartwright.

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two hundred and fifteen members. This was a victory ominous of coming defeat. On the 6th of May, Lord Archibald brought forward the general question by moving that a great number of petitions, which had been presented in the course of the session from the Scotch royal burghs should be referred to a Select Committee. Of the sixty-six royal burghs, thirty-nine, containing a population of above 420,000 souls, had by this time voted resolutions in favour of reform; while of the remaining twenty-seven small burghs the population amounted altogether to only about 60,000. The preponderance of opinion in Scotland on the side of burgh reform might therefore be taken to be as seven to one among the persons most interested in the matter and most competent to form a judgment upon it. Lord Archibald's present motion was opposed almost exclusively on the ground of the alleged connexion of burgh with parliamentary reform; but it was carried on a division, in a considerably fuller House, by the same majority by which his former one had been defeated, the numbers being, Ayes 149, Noes 141. Before the session terminated, a Report was presented from the Committee, in which they declared that the general allegations of the petitioners appeared to be borne out by the evidence. Another question on which the struggle of party in the House of Commons was equally close or doubtful was that of Catholic Emancipation. It was brought forward on the 3rd of May in the Commons by Grattan, in the shape of a motion that the state of the laws by which oaths were required to be taken, or declarations made, as qualifications for the enjoyment of offices and the exercise of civil functions, so far as they affected Roman Catholics, should be immediately taken into consideration in a Committee of the whole House. It was the last time that the great Irish patriot's eloquent voice was destined to be heard on that theme, almost the last time, indeed, that he was to take part in any parliamentary discussion; the debate that followed his opening speech was cut short by the clamour of the House for the vote, before either Canning, Plunket, or any other of the more eminent speakers on either side had risen; several members were shut out from the unexpected division; but the numbers, as ultimately settled, were 241 for the motion, and 243 against it. A fortnight later, a similar motion was made in the Lords by Lord Donoughmore, and was negatived, after a long debate, by a majority of 147 against 106.

PROROGATION,
13TH JULY.

Parliament was prorogued, on the 13th of July, by the Prince Regent in person. His Royal Highness spoke of attempts which had recently been made in some of the manufacturing districts to take advantage of circumstances of local distress to excite a spirit of disaffection, and urged the members of the legislature, on their return to their several counties, to use their utmost endeavours, in co-operation with the magistracy, to defeat the machinations of those who, under the pretence of reform, had in reality no other object but the subversion of the constitution. The origin, course, and issue of the state of things which had thus begun to darken the political horizon will now demand our attention.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE first session of the new Parliament had not strengthened the Ministry either with the country, or even in their own estimation. "The Ministry," Mr. Ward writes in the beginning of June, "is in a strange state. The majority of the House of Commons seems equally determined upon two points; first, that it shall always stumble; second, that it shall not fall. The result of the great battle that was fought upon Tierney's motion [for a Committee on the State of the Nation, on the 18th of May, when Ministers had a majority of more than two to one] seemed to promise more strength, but Thursday night [the 3rd of June, when the second reading of the Foreign Enlistment Bill was only carried by a majority of thirteen] was a complete relapse into languid support and negligent attendance. You may judge what opinion is formed by persons whose trade it is to understand such matters, of the honesty and firmness of the present Parliament, when I tell you that the dinner which the Prince gives to-day to some Opposition lords, was gravely assigned by the Secretary of the Treasury as a reason for the bad division to which I have just alluded upon the Enlistment Bill." The defect would seem from this account to have been rather one of discipline than of honesty; incidental, perhaps, in any circumstances to a first session, and in a higher degree to a Parliament having so precarious a tenure of existence as the present. It would appear, however, from disclosures which have recently been made, that at one time in the course of the session Ministers had seriously contemplated a resignation, and that in consequence not merely of the unmanageableness of the House of Commons, but also of differences of opinion among themselves. We have seen that when they met Parliament, they had not made up their minds upon any particular plan for settling the important and pressing question of the resumption of cash payments by the Bank. Mr. Peel stated distinctly, in proposing the arrangement which was actually adopted, that he had been made a convert to the principles upon which it was based by the evidence that had been adduced before the Secret Committee. The avowal of these principles by the Government was a retractation altogether unexpected at the time. In the same letter to which we have just referred, Mr. Ward writes from London to his friend at Oxford—"Those that are near the scene of action are not less surprised than yourself at the turn the Bullion question has taken. Canning says it is the greatest wonder that he has witnessed in the political world." In a preceding letter, written from Paris soon after the announcement of the new profession of faith by his old friends had reached him, the same shrewd observer, himself, though no zealot in politics, a steady ministerialist, with all the ordinary sympathies of a party man, and just about to start for England to take his seat in the new Parliament, to which he had been returned on a vacancy, after having been thrown out at the general election, had thus

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CONDITION OF THE
GOVERNMENT.Letters of the
Earl of Dudley,
p. 222.

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1d. p. 218.

expressed his opinion of the condition of the Government:—"I presume your friend Van [Vansittart] will be turned out. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive he should stay in after the Committee has reported upon principles directly opposite to his own. But his removal, and the substitution of Peel or Huskisson, will by no means cure the defects of the present Ministry, which has suffered itself to be dragged through the dirt the whole session. For the sake of the country, as well as for its own, it ought to make some effort to raise itself from the state of discredit and insignificance into which it has fallen; occasioned not so much by great strength or clear justice on the side of its opponents, as by the wavering conduct of lazy, capricious, pragmatistical friends, and by its own want of courage in not proposing to them the alternative of a more vigorous administration, or of instant resignation. As it is, we have a most vigorous Ministry, but no Government; an evil which, if it endures much longer, will be severely felt both at home and abroad." A letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Eldon, which Mr. Twiss has published, shows that the view of matters taken by the Prime Minister himself at this time closely coincided with that which Mr. Ward thus expressed. The defeat of the Government on Sir James Mackintosh's motion for a Select Committee on the state of the Criminal Law, the large minority on the Roman Catholic question, and again the success of Lord Archibald Hamilton's motion for Scotch Burgh Reform, had shown, as Mr. Twiss observes, under what imperfect control the House of Commons was. When the plan to be taken for the restoration of a metallic currency was first proposed in the Cabinet, it is conjectured not to have met with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor; and in a communication to the Premier, he appears to have suggested the postponement of the question for a couple of years. Lord Liverpool's reply is dated the 10th of May. After expressing his concern to find that they differ on so essential a point, his Lordship proceeds:—"I am sanguine enough to think that we have a reasonable chance of success in carrying the measures which were discussed on Saturday; but, whether I may turn out to be right or wrong, as to this I am quite satisfied, after long and anxious consideration, that, if we cannot carry what has been proposed, it is far, far better for the country that we should cease to be the Government. After the defeats we have already experienced during this session, our remaining in office is a *positive* evil. It confounds all ideas of government in the minds of men. It disgraces us *personally*, and renders us less capable every day of being of any real service to the country, either now or hereafter. If, therefore, things are to remain as they are, I am quite clear that there is no advantage, in any way, in our being the persons to carry on the public service. A strong and decisive effort can alone redeem our character and credit, and is as necessary for the country as it is for ourselves. As to a postponement for two years, it would be mere self-delusion, and is far more objectionable in my judgment, in every bearing, than at once renouncing all idea of setting the finances of the country right."* There is reason to believe that the bold course taken by Ministers on

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 329.

* We may remark, however, that this letter hardly bears out the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Twiss, that the Chancellor did not at first concur with the majority of the Cabinet in their favourable opinion of Mr. Ricardo's plan. His difference with Lord Liverpool may have been simply on the prudence or expediency of the Government taking its stand upon

the Bank question did produce something of the effect which Lord Liverpool anticipated, and strengthened them both within the walls of Parliament and out of doors. We find Lord Sidmouth writing to Lord Exmouth on the 21st of June: "The close of our parliamentary campaign is far more satisfactory than its commencement. The Government has now received decisive proofs of that degree of confidence without which it could not be conducted honourably to ourselves, or usefully to the public." The Home Secretary and his colleagues, however, had got released only for a very short time from the warfare of Parliament when they found themselves in the thick of another of a different and more serious description.

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Reform meetings had continued to be held occasionally in the manufacturing districts from the beginning of the year. It was on the 18th of January that Orator Hunt made his first appearance in a public capacity in Manchester. Application had been made to the Boroughreeve and constables to summon a meeting to petition Parliament for the repeal of the Corn Law. On their refusal an anonymous advertisement appeared, fixing the meeting for the day we have mentioned. Hunt, who had accepted an invitation to preside, was met by the multitude and conducted into the town in a style which must have been very soothing to his vanity, flags with the mottoes of "No Corn Laws," "Universal Suffrage," "Rights of Man," "Hunt and Liberty," being borne before him; the gathering place was that same St. Peter's Field, soon to be made so famous by the events of another day. Hunt in his speech derided the proposal of petitioning Parliament, and the demand of the assembly was put into the form of a remonstrance to the Prince Regent; other speeches, of more or less violence, were delivered; and then the people peaceably dispersed. An evening or two after this Hunt was roughly handled in the theatre at Manchester by some officers of the 7th Hussars, who alleged that he had hissed when "God save the King" was called for—an incident which, of course, he did not fail to turn to account. He immediately wrote to the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, and published his letter. At the same time he wrote to Samuel Bamford at Middleton, requesting that zealous follower, as he then was, to come to him. When they met the next day he directed Bamford to procure some ten or a dozen stout fellows to take their places in the pit on the evening of the following Monday, when he would again present himself in the theatre. On the appointed night Bamford was at the pit door by six o'clock, accompanied by nine other Middleton cotton or silk weavers, picked men, each armed with a stout cudgel. The ten rough-looking country fellows had attracted some notice as they passed through the streets. Bamford gives a graphic description of them, which we quote the rather, as it must be understood to set before us the writer's own personal appearance, at least in general outline:—"They were all young men,—tall, gaunt, and square-built,—long-

CONTINUANCE
OF REFORM
AGITATION.Life of a Radical;
i. 169—176.

that plan, and endeavouring to force it at the present moment upon the acceptance of Parliament. This, at least, may have been all the dissent that he professed. We may admit that the new monetary doctrine was not likely to find the readiest or most enthusiastic of disciples either in Eldon or Vansittart; but it is hardly to be supposed that any member of the Cabinet could have deferred to so late a moment an intimation of absolute hostility to the principles of the Government plan. The Report of both the Secret Committees had by this time been presented.

1819. legged, free-limbed, and lithe as stag-hounds ; and as they went tramp, tramp, along the flags, people looked, startled, and looked again ; while the observed ones, nothing noticing, went onwards like men who knew their work, and were both able and willing to perform it." A crowd soon collected and filled the street in which the theatre stood ; but any serious mischief was prevented by the prudent determination of the manager to have no performance that evening. Hunt, however, had his triumph, and one which suited his purpose as well, and was probably quite as much to his taste, as would have been any he could have had in a *mêlée* within the walls of the theatre. After some time a coach drove into the street, and on its being ascertained to contain the great popular champion, and some of his friends, a loud huzza burst from the dense multitude. A few hisses were soon silenced. "Hunt," continues Bamford, "then mounted the box, and, addressing the people, stated that the manager had written to him saying there would not be any performance that night, and requesting (I think) that he would come up and try to get the people to disperse and go home. He next entered on some general topics, and, with singular bad taste, to say the least of it (for his impetuosity overran his judgment), he said the authorities only wanted a pretext to let the bloody butchers of Waterloo loose upon the people ; and concluded by advising them to retire to their homes peaceably. We then gave three cheers, the carriage disappeared, and the street was soon deserted. Our party went to the Robin Hood, where we were joined by a score or two of others, and we set to and caroused until midnight, and then returned home."

CONDITION OF THE
PEOPLE.

The rest of the winter and the spring passed in quiet, and without any movement among the working classes to excite alarm or uneasiness. As the year advanced, however, a growing depression in the labour market was experienced in all the districts of the kingdom where the population was the most numerous. The biographer of Lord Sidmouth has printed a letter addressed to that minister in December of the preceding year by Lord Sheffield (Gibbon's friend), in which the writer, a very old man, but with his faculties still entire and active, and accustomed all his life to watch the fluctuations in the economical state of the country, reports his views both on the actual condition of things at that moment and on the prospects of the future. He cannot, he says, resist the pleasure of communicating the very satisfactory accounts he has received of the state of trade and manufactures from different parts, and especially from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, the rest of Warwickshire, and from Staffordshire. "Both trade and manufactures," he goes on to observe, "are in a flourishing condition, and likely to improve still further. There appears to be little speculation beyond the regular demands of the different markets, men without adequate capital finding it almost impossible to procure credit ; so that there is now no disposition to force a trade, and no injurious competition among the merchants to procure the execution of orders, and, consequently, wages are fair and reasonable." In point of fact, however, although Lord Sheffield was correct in his belief that the season of unsafe speculation had passed away, he was too hasty or too sanguine in assuming that the mischievous results of the late extravagant overtrading were yet exhausted. It has been common to attribute the commercial pressure which was felt throughout the spring and summer of this year, 1819, in whole or in part to

Life of Lord
Sidmouth ; iii. 242.

the measures that were taken by the Legislature for the restoration of a metallic or at least convertible currency, and the contraction of the circulation to which the Bank is assumed to have been thereby driven in its own defence. Mr. Tooke has demonstrated the entirely imaginary nature of this theory by many facts and considerations, and especially by the fact that the bank did not reduce its issues during the period of the pressure, and that no such contraction of the circulation as is alleged then took place. The amount of Bank of England paper in circulation was, on the contrary, rather greater in August than it had been in February. The late excessive importations, however, were continuing to produce their natural effects, or rather the consequent and inevitable fall of prices was at last bringing down the speculators in great numbers; the bankruptcies in each of the six months from February to July inclusive were about double the ordinary average; credit sustained a shock; the interest of money rose; while the glut in the market of commodities obstructed the channels, the pressure in the money market clogged the wheels, of trade; finally, the market of labour came in for its share of the universal depression; employment became more difficult to be procured; wages fell. At the same time food maintained a high price; wheat, which had been at 80s. in February, had only fallen to 68s. 10d. in June, and had risen again to 75s. in August. The first meetings of the operative classes, accordingly, were called to consider the low rate of wages. Such were those of the gingham-weavers of Carlisle and the neighbourhood in the end of May. These were succeeded, towards the middle of the following month, by others at Hunslet Moor near Leeds, at Glasgow, and at Ashton-under-Line, which assumed more of a political character, but at which the distress under which the people were suffering still supplied the text of every speech, and parliamentary reform and other such measures were proposed and recommended chiefly as remedies for that. The agitation, however, grew bolder as it proceeded; and the Government now began to look at what was going on with considerable anxiety and apprehension. Still no breach of the public peace had been committed. On occasion of the Glasgow meeting, which took place on the 16th, a large body of military was in readiness to act; the multitude which assembled on the Green that summer afternoon amounted, it is supposed, to between thirty and forty thousand persons; but after going through their work they dispersed as quietly as if they had been only three or four met together. What took place at this convention, however, illustrates the natural course of mob deliberation. The people, mostly poor cotton-weavers, either out of employment or working at the lowest wages, appear to have been drawn together in the first instance simply by the hope of getting something done which might better their condition; the resolutions proposed by the parties that had called the meeting, after a statement of the prevailing distress, concluded with a petition to the Prince Regent to the effect that his Royal Highness would be graciously pleased to afford such of their number as wished it the means of emigrating to Canada, the emigrants engaging to repay the expense by yearly remittances of produce. But upon these original resolutions an amendment was moved, declaring that no good was to be expected from any thing except annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and a diminution of taxation; speeches were delivered scouting alike

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History of Prices;
ii. 91, &c.

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emigration and petitioning, unless indeed the people, as was strongly recommended, would march in a body to London, and present their petition to the Regent themselves; and in the end the amendment was declared to be carried, though the vote in its favour was obtained, as is alleged, only by its supporters having taken possession of the space immediately around the hustings, and knocking down the hats and uplifted hands of their opponents, whose peaceable disposition prevented them from resenting or resisting such treatment. The oratory at the Ashton-under-Line meeting, where the chair was taken by a person calling himself the Reverend Joseph Harrison, and one of the speakers was the self-taught or rather untaught medical practitioner, Dr. Healey, who makes so amusing a figure in Bamford's autobiography, was still more violent and extravagant. At another great meeting which took place at Stockport on the 28th of June, the chairman was Sir Charles Wolseley, Bt., who appears to have made his *début* on this occasion. In an address which he delivered before descending from his post of honour, Sir Charles, after swearing to be faithful to the cause of annual parliaments and universal suffrage so long as his heart's blood should flow in his veins, informed his admiring auditors that his political career had commenced in France, that he was one of those who mounted the ramparts of the Bastille at the commencement of the revolution in that country, and that, if he did that for France, he should never shrink from attacking the Bastilles of his own country. At this meeting one of the insignia displayed from the hustings was the Cap of Liberty on the top of a flag-staff. On that day fortnight, the 12th of July, another meeting was held at New Hall-hill, near Birmingham, where Sir Charles Wolseley was elected "Legislatorial Attorney and Representative" for that town. This transaction seems to have startled Government more than any thing that had yet taken place, and probably determined it not to stand any longer aloof. Indictments were now presented both against Wolseley and Harrison for seditious words spoken at the Stockport meeting, and, true bills having been found by the Grand Jury, Sir Charles was arrested at his own house of Wolseley Park in Staffordshire on the 19th. On the 21st a meeting was held at Smithfield in London, at which Hunt presided; it had been announced for some time, and was looked forward to with considerable apprehension; a strong force, both civil and military, was stationed at various points in the vicinity of the place; but the demeanour of the assembled people was perfectly peaceable from first to last. Here Harrison was arrested on the hustings, by the same constable, Buck, who had taken Sir Charles Wolseley into custody two days before, and who the next day, on bringing Harrison to Stockport, was there attacked by some of the friends and disciples of his prisoner, one of whom fired a pistol at him and lodged the bullet in his body.

Three remarkable innovations are particularized in the contemporary accounts as having distinguished the present stage of the popular movement. It is stated to have been now that the Reformers first assumed the name of Radicals. We have given in a former page Bamford's account of the origin of female Reform Associations. "An entirely novel and truly portentous circumstance," says the Annual Register for 1819, "was the formation of a *Female Reform Society* at Blackburn, near Manchester, from which circular letters were issued, inviting the wives and daughters of workmen in different branches

NOVELTIES IN THE
REFORM MOVEMENT.

See ante, p. 212.

of manufacture to form *sister* societies, for the purpose of co-operating with the men, and of instilling into the minds of their children 'a deep-rooted hatred of our tyrannical rulers.' A deputation from this society attended the Blackburn Reform Meeting, and, mounting the scaffold, presented a Cap of Liberty and an address to the Assembly. The example of these females was successfully recommended to imitation by the orators at other meetings."

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The Blackburn meeting here alluded to appears to have been held on the 5th of July. The third circumstance is the military training alleged to have been DRILLING.

now practised by the Reformers. There is, and can be, no dispute about the fact; the only question is as to the design or object of the practice. Numerous informations upon this matter were taken by the Lancashire magistrates, and transmitted to the Government, in the first days of August. We find one of the magistrates writing to Lord Sidmouth on the 5th of that month, that "the drilling parties increase very extensively." On the 7th several persons state upon oath, that "in various parts of the neighbourhood of Bury there are nightly assemblies of great numbers of men, who meet together to learn and practise military training." Other witnesses swear on the 9th to having seen the same thing going on in the neighbourhood of Bolton. Many of the informations relate to the drilling of a large number of persons on Sunday the 8th at Tandle Hill, near Rochdale. One of the informants speaks of a man who told him that he had been drilled there on that day, and that a similar meeting would take place on the Sunday following, but that that would be the last. These dates are very important. An impression was generally produced at the time that the training had been going on in secret for a long while, and that it was a part of the general tactics of the Radical Reform movement, the dark purpose of which was placed beyond doubt by the extreme care with which the practice had been concealed for many months. But there is in fact no evidence whatever to show that any thing of the kind existed any where previous to these first days of the month of August; and we have just seen that the persons engaged in the drilling themselves spoke of it with perfect frankness, as far as appears, and without seeming to have any intention to deceive, as something that would be all over in a few days. It has all the look of having been merely a preparation for some particular occasion. That it was really nothing more we are assured by Bamford. It was, according to his straightforward account, adopted solely with a view to the great meeting to be held at Manchester on the 16th of this month.

Life of a Radical;
i. 177—180.

"It was deemed expedient," says Bamford, "that this meeting should be as morally effective as possible, and that it should exhibit a spectacle such as had never before been witnessed in England. We had frequently been taunted by the press with our ragged, dirty appearance at these assemblages; with the confusion of our proceedings, and the mob-like crowds in which our numbers were mustered; and we determined that, for once at least, these reflections should not be deserved." Of four injunctions issued by the committees, the observance of two, cleanliness and sobriety, was left to the good sense of individuals; that of the other two, order and peace, was provided for by general regulations. The drilling was the discipline adopted to secure order in their movements. "These drillings," Bamford adds, "were also, to our sedentary weavers and spinners, periods of healthful exercise and enjoyment. . . . When

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dusk came, and we could no longer see to work, we jumped from our looms, rushed to the sweet cool air of the fields, or the waste lands, or the green lane sides. . . . Or, in the grey of a fine Sunday morn, we would saunter through the mists, fragrant with the night odour of flowers and of new hay, and, ascending the Tandle Hills, salute the broad sun as he climbed from behind the high moors of Saddleworth. . . . There was not any arms,—no use for any,—no pretence for any; nor would they have been permitted. Some of the elderly men, the old soldiers, or those who came to watch, might bring a walking-staff; or a young fellow might pull a stake from a hedge in going to drill, or in returning home; but, assuredly, we had nothing like arms about us. There were no armed meetings; there were no midnight drillings. Why should we seek to conceal what we had no hesitation in performing in broad day? There was not any thing of the sort.” We believe this to be the true account of the matter; and that the Government, the magistrates, probably many of the informants of the latter themselves, and the public in general, were frightened by an imagination of what had no existence. The drilling, whatever it might have led to, or have become if allowed to go on, had not, as far as it had yet gone, any thing of the character ascribed to it. It was neither a clandestine nor an armed drilling. Whether or no it was a thing which the law should have allowed is another question. It was perhaps liable to be abused, or carried out to purposes very different from its original one. Bamford himself admits that it had its seductions and dangers, or at least its liabilities to misconstruction both by lookers on, and, in some degree, even by those engaged in it. “Some extravagancies,” he observes, “some acts, and some speeches, better let alone, certainly did take place. When the men clapped their hands in ‘standing at ease,’ some would jokingly say it was ‘firing,’ whilst those who were sent to observe us (and probably we were seldom unattended by such), and who knew little about military motions, would take the joke as a reality, and report accordingly; whence probably it would be surmised that we had arms, and that our drillings were only preparatory to their more effective use.”

MANCHESTER
MEETING.

We are now come to the great event of the year, and the most memorable incident in the history of these popular movements. The election of Sir Charles Wolseley at Birmingham appears to have suggested a similar proceeding to the reformers of Manchester. Mr. Hunt, we suppose, must have been the person who was to have had the honour of being elected legislative attorney for that town. On Saturday, the 31st of July, an advertisement was published in the Manchester Observer, inviting the inhabitants to meet on Monday, the 9th of August, in “the area near St. Peter’s Church,” for the purposes of choosing a representative, and of adopting Major Cartwright’s plan of Parliamentary Reform. The magistrates immediately put forth placards, declaring the intended meeting to be illegal, and warning the people to abstain from attending it at their peril. Upon this, on Wednesday the 4th of August, the parties who had called the meeting announced in a hand-bill that it would not take place, but that a requisition would be addressed to the boroughreeve and constables requesting them to convene a meeting at as early a day as possible, “to consider the propriety of adopting the most legal and effectual means of adopting Reform in the Commons House of Parliament.”

This requisition was numerously signed in the course of the day. On its prayer being refused by the magistrates, the parties who had originally moved in the matter gave notice that the meeting would take place in St. Peter's Field on Monday the 16th. It was intimated that Mr. Hunt would take the chair.

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All was now busier preparation than ever in every town and village around Manchester. It is remarkable that the great manufacturing metropolis itself seems to have remained comparatively unaroused, and not to have contributed any thing like its due proportion of numbers to the mighty reform gathering. Indeed, while bodies of three, four, or five thousand persons are spoken of as pouring in from almost every one of the two-and-thirty points of the compass, and every separate neighbouring district was represented on the ground by its dense and extended array, we do not recollect that any distinct body of Manchester reformers is mentioned at all. Some of the accounts, indeed, expressly state that the Manchester working-people generally took little part in the demonstration, and that such of them as joined the crowd seemed to have come for the most part only as lookers on.

We believe that Bamford's animated description of the procession of his fellow-townsmen, the reformers of Middleton, who put themselves under his guidance, conveys a fair impression of the spirit in which the affair was entered upon by the generality of those engaged in it. By eight o'clock on that Monday morning, he tells us, the whole town of Middleton was on the alert. Those who did not intend to go to the meeting came out at least to see the procession. The marshalled array was headed by twelve youths in two rows, each holding in his hand a branch of laurel, "as a token," says Bamford, "of amity and peace;" and therefore, we must suppose, representing the olive on this occasion. There were two silk flags, the one blue, the other green, with 'Unity and Strength,' 'Liberty and Fraternity,' 'Parliaments Annual,' and 'Suffrage Universal,' inscribed on them in letters of gold; and a Cap of Liberty, of crimson velvet with a tuft of laurel, was borne aloft between them. The men marched five abreast, every hundred having a leader distinguished by a sprig of laurel in his hat; over these centurions were superior officers similarly decorated. Bamford himself, as conductor of the whole, walked at the head of the column, with a bugleman by his side to sound his orders. Before setting out, the entire number, of not less than three thousand men, having formed a hollow square, while probably as many more people stood around them, and silence having been obtained, Bamford shortly addressed them. After expressing his hope that their conduct would be marked by a steadiness and seriousness befitting the important occasion, he requested them "not to offer any insult or provocation by word or deed, nor to notice any persons who might do the same by them, but to keep such persons as quiet as possible; for, if they began to retaliate, the least disturbance might serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting. If the peace officers, he added, should come to arrest himself or any other person, they were not to offer any resistance, but to suffer them to execute their office peaceably. He also told them that, in conformity with a rule laid down by the committee, no sticks nor weapons of any description would be allowed to be carried in the ranks; and those who had such were requested to put them aside. Many sticks, he states, were in consequence left behind, and only a few walking staves were retained by the

Life of a Radical;
ii. 197—204.

1819.

oldest and most infirm. There is reason, however, to believe that sticks were carried to the meeting in greater numbers by some of the other parties. "I may say with truth," continues Bamford, speaking of the body under his own command, "that we presented a most respectable assemblage of labouring men; all were decently though humbly attired; and I noticed not even one who did not exhibit a white Sunday's shirt, a neck-cloth, and other apparel, in the same clean, though homely, condition." After their leader's speech, which was received with cheers, they resumed their marching order, and, the music having struck up, set out at a slow pace. They were soon joined by the Rochdale people, the united numbers making probably six thousand men. A hundred or two of women, mostly young wives, preceded the column; about as many girls, sweethearts of the unmarried lads, danced to the music, or sung snatches of popular songs; even some children went forward with them, although a score or two of others were sent back; while some hundreds of stragglers walked alongside. As they proceeded they received various accessions to their ranks. At Newtown, not far from Manchester, Bamford was beckoned to by a gentleman to whom he was known, one of the partners in a firm in whose employment the reform leader had lately been. Taking Bamford's hand, he said kindly, though in a tone expressing some anxiety, that he hoped no harm was intended by all those people that were coming in. Bamford replied that he would pledge his life for their entire peaceableness. "I asked him," he continues, "to notice them: did they look like persons wishing to outrage the law? Were they not, on the contrary, evidently heads of decent working families, or members of such families? 'No, no,' I said, 'my dear sir, and old respected master, if any wrong or violence take place they will be committed by men of a different stamp from these.' He said he was very glad to hear me say so; he was happy he had seen me, and gratified by the manner in which I had expressed myself. I asked, did he 'think we should be interrupted at the meeting? He said he did not believe we should. 'Then,' I replied, 'all will be well;' and, shaking hands, with mutual good wishes, I left him, and took my station as before." After they had entered Manchester, they heard that, among other parties which had preceded them, the Lees and Saddleworth Union had been led by Doctor Healey, "walking before a pitch-black flag, with staring white letters, forming the words—

- 'Equal Representation or Death,'—'Love,'—two hands joined, and a heart; all in white paint, and presenting one of the most sepulchral-looking objects that could be contrived." "The idea," observes Bamford, "of my diminutive friend leading a funeral procession of his own patients—such it appeared to me—was calculated to force a smile even at that thoughtful moment." They seem to have reached the place of meeting, where they found an immense multitude already collected, about half an hour before noon. As other parties successively arrived, they became more and more inclosed, till they finally stood about the centre of the vast multitude. About half an hour after their arrival, reiterated shouts proclaimed the near approach of the great man of the day; Hunt came, preceded by a band of music, and flags flying, standing up in an open barouche, on the box of which sat a woman, who, it afterwards appeared, had made no proper or original part of the show, but had only been hoisted into the carriage as it passed through the crowd, while a number of

his male friends were seated around him. "Their approach," says Bamford, "was hailed by one universal shout from probably eighty thousand persons. They threaded their way slowly past us, and through the crowd, which Hunt eyed, I thought, with almost as much of astonishment as satisfaction." The hustings, erected upon two waggons, stood close to the place where Bamford and his party were posted.

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The arrangements made by the authorities for the part they were to act, on the other hand, are to be found authentically detailed in the communications addressed by themselves at the time to the Government, which were afterwards laid before Parliament, in the evidence given on the subsequent trial of Hunt and his associates at York, and most distinctly in a valuable and interesting narrative of the events of the day furnished to the biographer of Lord Sidmouth by Sir William J. H. Jolliffe, Bart., M.P., who, as a lieutenant of the 15th Hussars, was himself an actor in the scene he has described. A numerous committee of magistrates of the county had been constantly sitting since Saturday morning, taking depositions, and considering what they should do. It seems to have been upon considerable hesitation that they resolved not to attempt to prevent the meeting, but to defer the execution of a warrant which was issued for the arrest of the leaders till the people had all assembled and the proceedings had commenced. The reasons for the adoption of this course are not explained; it is only stated that the committee "contented themselves, till they saw what the complexion of the meeting might be, or what circumstances might arise, with coming to this determination only, which they adopted in concurrence with some of the most intelligent gentlemen of the town." About two hundred special constables had been sworn in; and the military force which they had at their command consisted of six troops of the 15th Hussars, which had been quartered in the cavalry barracks near the town for about six weeks—a troop of horse artillery, with two guns—nearly the whole of the 31st regiment of infantry—some companies of the 88th regiment—the Cheshire Yeomanry, comprising between three and four hundred men, who only arrived on the morning of the 16th; and lastly, a troop of Manchester Yeomanry, numbering about forty members, chiefly wealthy master manufacturers. The special constables and the Manchester Yeomanry the magistrates retained under their own immediate orders; the command of the rest of the force was taken by Colonel Guy L'Estrange, of the 31st regiment, as the senior officer, in the absence of Sir John Byng (now Earl of Strafford), the general of the district, who was at his head-quarters at Pontefract, and to whom it would appear, among all the preparations that were made, no intimation had been sent of what was intended to be done, or of the strong view that was taken of the seriousness of the emergency. Of course, however, the military could only act on being authorized or called upon by the civil power. Early in the forenoon of the 16th the constables were posted one portion of them close to the hustings in the centre of St. Peter's Field, the rest so as to maintain a communication from thence to a private house on the south side of that irregular square space of ground, to which the magistrates repaired about eleven o'clock from the Star Inn, where they had first assembled. The distance from this house to the hustings was stated on the trial at York to have been about three or four hundred yards, but it was probably not quite so much; the entire

Letter from Mr. Hay, one of the magistrates, to Lord Sidmouth, 16th August.

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extent of St. Peter's Field, now all built over, was only between two and three acres. The military force was disposed as follows. Two squadrons of the 15th Hussars, having been marched into town about ten o'clock, were dismounted in a wide street to the north of St. Peter's Field, and at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from it; the Cheshire Yeomanry were formed on their left in the same street; of the remaining troops of the Hussars, one was attached to the artillery, which took up a position between the Cavalry Barracks and the town, and the other remained in charge of the barracks. The Manchester Yeomanry were stationed in a street to the east of the field. The infantry were kept in readiness, but were not called upon to act till after the meeting had been dispersed. The whole work, as will presently appear, was done by the forty Manchester Yeomanry, and the two squadrons (four troops, or three hundred and twenty men) of the 15th Hussars.

The band which accompanied Hunt and his party on their approach played the national airs of "Rule Britannia," and "God save the King," during which it is said the people generally, or many of them at least, held their hats off. No time was then lost in proceeding to the business of the day. As soon as Hunt and his friends had mounted the hustings, the music ceased, upon which it was formally proposed that Mr. Hunt should take the chair; the motion, being seconded, was carried by acclamation, and the orator, advancing to the front of the stage, took off his white hat, and addressed the now silent and listening multitude. He had only, however, uttered a few sentences, when a confused murmur and pressure, beginning at one verge of the field, and rapidly rolling onwards, brought him to a pause. The soldiers were upon the people.

The account given by Mr. Hulton, the chairman of the Bench of Magistrates, when he was afterwards examined on the trial at York, was, that, when, after the meeting had assembled, the warrant for the apprehension of the Reform leaders was given to Nadin, the chief constable, that person declared that he could not execute it without military aid; upon which two letters were despatched, one to the commander of the Manchester Yeomanry, the other to Colonel L'Estrange, requiring them to come to the house where the magistrates were. The Yeomanry, being nearest at hand, made their appearance first. They came from Mosley Street. These must have been the troops that were seen by Bamford as he was retiring from the ground with a friend to get some refreshment. "I stood on tiptoe," he says, "and looked to the direction whence the noise proceeded, and saw a party of cavalry in blue and white uniform come trotting sword in hand round the corner of a garden wall, and to the front of a row of new houses, where they reined up in a line." This was in front of the house where the magistrates were. Mr. Hulton says that the troop came up at a quick pace, and that the moment they appeared the crowd set up a tremendous shout. The shout, as Bamford understood it, was one of good-will. It appears that, when Hunt first saw the confusion, he exclaimed that it was some trick, meaning, perhaps, an attempt to frighten the meeting, and called to the people to be firm, and to give three cheers, which was done. All parties agree that after the people had shouted the yeomanry, who had now halted about three minutes, waved their swords and advanced. There are contradictory accounts of the pace at which they endea-

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voured to move forward ; in point of fact they appear to have penetrated the dense crowd not in a body at all, or in any kind of marching order, but singly and separately. Of course they were soon brought to a stand. This was the state in which things were when the two squadrons of Hussars came up, having made their way round by the west side of the field. "It was then," says Sir W. Jolliffe, "for the first time that I saw the Manchester troop of Yeomanry ; they were scattered singly, or in small groups, over the greater part of the field, literally hemmed up, and wedged into the mob, so that they were powerless either to make an impression or to escape : in fact, they were in the power of those whom they were designed to overawe ; and it required only a glance to discover their helpless position, and the necessity of our being brought to their rescue." Here then was the second device of the magistrates for the execution of the warrant utterly baffled ; their first notion was to entrust it to Nadin, the constable, who told them that to execute it with the force at his command was impossible ; and now the troop of armed yeomen, which was next tried, and which had actually made the attempt, was stuck fast, and could neither advance nor retreat. Mr. Hulton's own account is that, at the moment when the Hussars arrived, he conceived the Manchester Yeomanry to be completely beaten. When Colonel L'Estrange, he says, asked him what he was to do, he exclaimed, "Good God, sir, do you not see how they are attacking the yeomanry ?—Disperse the crowd." On this the word "Forward" was instantly given, the trumpet sounded, and the cavalry dashed among the multitude. Their charge swept every thing before it. "People, yeomen, and constables," says Sir W. Jolliffe, "in their confused attempts to escape, ran one over the other ; so that, by the time we had arrived at the end of the field the fugitives were literally piled up to a considerable elevation above the level of the ground." As soon as he had given his orders to Colonel L'Estrange, Mr. Hulton tells us he left the window, because he "would rather not see any advance of the military." The Hussars generally, Sir W. Jolliffe states, drove the people forward with the flats of their swords ; "but sometimes," he adds, "as is almost inevitably the case when men are placed in such situations, the edge was used, both by the Hussars, and, as I have heard, by the yeomen also ; but of this latter fact, however, I was not cognizant ; and, believing though I do that nine out of ten of the sabre wounds were caused by the Hussars, I must still consider that it redounds highly to the humane forbearance of the men of the 15th that more wounds were not received, when the vast numbers are taken into consideration with whom they were brought into hostile collision." There can be no doubt, however, as he observes, that "the far greater amount of injuries arose from the pressure of the routed multitude." The scene during the few minutes that it took to effect the dispersion must have been terrific in the extreme. Bamford, who does not distinguish between the advance of the Yeomanry and that of the Hussars, and whose situation did not allow him to do so, has described it with perhaps a little rhetorical license in some particulars, but with probably little exaggeration of the general effect. 'Stand fast,' he called out to those around him, when he saw the troops darting forward ; 'they are riding upon us ; stand fast.' "And there was a general cry," he says, "in our quarter of 'Stand fast.' The cavalry were in confusion : they

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evidently could not, with all the weight of man and horse, penetrate that compact mass of human beings; and their sabres were plied to hew a way through naked held up hands and defenceless heads; and then chopped limbs and wound-gaping skulls were seen; and groans and cries were mingled with the din of that horrid confusion. 'Ah! ah!' 'For shame! for shame!' was shouted. Then 'Break! break! They are killing them in front, and they cannot get away;' and there was a general cry of 'Break! break!' For a moment the crowd held back as in a pause; then was a rush, heavy and resistless as a headlong sea, and a sound like low thunder, with screams, prayers, and imprecations from the crowd, moiled and sabre-doomed, who could not escape. . . . In ten minutes from the commencement of the havoc, the field was an open and almost deserted space. The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air. . . . The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag-staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field were strewn caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress, trampled, torn, and bloody. . . . Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning, others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath; and others would never breathe more. All was silent save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds. Persons might sometimes be noticed peeping from attics and over the tall ridgings of houses, but they quickly withdrew, as if fearful of being observed, or unable to sustain the full gaze of a scene so hideous and abhorrent." About thirty wounded persons were carried to the infirmary in the course of that afternoon and the following day; and about forty more were able to come themselves to have slighter injuries looked at and dressed. There were no doubt some cases besides that were not heard of. The greater number of the injuries were contusions or fractures; the cases of sabre wounds do not appear to have been more than twenty or thirty. Three or four persons were wounded on the evening of the fatal day by the fire of one of the regiments of foot, which was ordered to clear the streets, where the people had re-assembled in great numbers, and their conduct had begun to be threatening. Altogether the number of lives lost appears to have been five or six, including one of the special constables, ridden over by the Hussars, and one of the Manchester yeomen struck off his horse by a brickbat, and who had his skull fractured either by the blow or the fall.

Hunt and some eight or ten of his friends were seized by the first of the military who came up to the hustings; and, being brought up before the magistrates on the Friday following, were then remanded on a charge of high treason. On that day week, however, by which time Bamford and one or two others who had made their escape on the day of the meeting had been apprehended, having been brought up again, they were informed that Government had for the present abandoned that charge, and that they would be only detained till they should find bail, to be tried for the misdemeanour of having conspired to alter the law by force and threats.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Manchester Massacre, as it came very generally to be designated, was at once felt on all hands to have made an epoch in the history of the contest with Radicalism. A new scene of that drama had commenced. Other feelings were called up, and a change was to come over the course of action, on both sides. The Manchester Magistrates themselves were probably as much astonished as anybody at what they had done. Many other radical meetings had been held in all parts of the country, but nothing had happened at any of them like what had taken place here. The dispersion of a popular meeting by armed force, on the ground solely of its being formidable from its numbers, might be a legal proceeding, but similar circumstances had again and again occurred of late without its having been adopted. Why should not this meeting have been allowed to be held without being so interfered with, as well as any of those that had preceded it? Could not the public safety have been as effectually preserved now as on so many former occasions, merely by the necessary preparations being made for repressing any outbreak on the part of the people, if such should be attempted? Or, if the arrest of Hunt and his associates was necessary or expedient, could that object not have been effected in another way? If it would have been too hazardous for Nadin, the peace officer, to have attempted to apprehend them during the meeting, as Harrison had been apprehended a few weeks before without difficulty at Smithfield, might they not have been easily seized at any time either before the meeting, or after it? These and other such questions could not fail to suggest themselves. But, above all, they must have been conscious, for it is undeniable, and is, indeed, as good as confessed, that, after all their two days' deliberation, they had allowed the morning of the day of meeting to come upon them without being prepared with any determined plan of action. Their notion of being guided by circumstances was manifestly nothing more than a vague hope that something might happen to deliver them in some way or other from their indecision and perplexity, and compel them, as it were, to take some particular course. Accordingly, we see them standing aloof and doing nothing as long as they can. They neither attempt to prevent the meeting taking place, nor to arrest the popular leaders on their way to it. Then, one favourable opportunity having thus been let slip after another, they clutch as if in desperation at what seems their last chance of doing any thing. It is determined that the forty Manchester yeomen shall attempt to walk their horses up to the hustings through the densely packed and all but impenetrable multitude, whose closing around each, and separating him from his comrades, as soon as he had moved a few yards forward, was inevitable. This was not to be guided by circumstances, but to be driven on by the impulse of trepidation or passion. All that followed was the result of the failure of this attempt, which could not but fail. It is clear that the order to the Hussars to clear the ground was the thought

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CONDUCT OF THE
MANCHESTER
MAGISTRATES.

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of the instant. Up to that moment no such proceeding had been contemplated or dreamt of. The people were not allowed to assemble in order that they might be swept off the ground by a charge of cavalry. The dispersion and bloodshed were not premeditated; they were the convulsive effort of the authorities to extricate themselves from a danger, real or imaginary, into which a previous false step had precipitated them. Perhaps a sounder judgment might have seen that the yeomanry, after they had entered the crowd, were not in so much peril as they appeared to be in to Mr. Hulton; but, however this may have been, the grand mistake had been committed in placing them in that position. That this was a blunder was demonstrated by what immediately ensued, was acknowledged by the magistrates themselves in the very next order they issued. Nor was the failure one the blame of which was to be laid upon circumstances having turned out otherwise than might have been expected; the experiment was much the same as if the forty yeomen had been ordered to advance through the water upon a vessel lying a quarter of a mile out at sea. It was an experiment which could not succeed in any circumstances.

CONDUCT OF THE
GOVERNMENT.

On the other hand, however wanting in discretion they may have shown themselves, however grievous an error in judgment they may have committed, it does not appear that the Manchester magistrates can be made out to have done any thing absolutely illegal on this occasion. They were of course justified on the sworn informations they had received in issuing their warrant for the arrest of Hunt and his associates; the warrant could be legally executed at the time when the attempt to execute it was made; and any resistance, or supposed resistance, to the officer entrusted with it, might be legally put down by any available force which appeared to be necessary for that purpose. This was no doubt the view of the case which determined the Government, under the advice of the law officers, to notify immediately their sanction of what had been done. The statement which Lord Sidmouth afterwards made in Parliament was, that the account of what had taken place at Manchester reached Ministers on Tuesday night; that on Wednesday one of the magistrates, accompanied by another gentleman, arrived in town to give the Government the fullest information on all the circumstances; that a Cabinet Council was immediately summoned, at which the Attorney and Solicitor-General were present; that the two gentlemen from Manchester gave minute details of every thing; and that the law officers then gave it as their opinion that the conduct of the magistrates was completely justified by the necessity under which they acted. It appears that the first thing the Home Secretary did upon this was to write to the Prince Regent. The reply of his Royal Highness was despatched by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield on the 19th from the Royal George Yacht off Christchurch. It conveyed the Regent's "approbation and high commendation of the conduct of the magistrates and civil authorities at Manchester, as well as of the officers and troops, both regular and yeomanry cavalry, whose firmness and effectual support of the civil power preserved the peace of the town on that most critical occasion." Lord Sidmouth then, on the 21st, addressed letters to the Earls of Derby and Stamford, the Lord Lieutenants of Lancashire and Cheshire, intimating that he had been commanded by the Prince Regent to request that their lordships would express to the

Debate of 23rd
Nov. 1819;
Hansard, xli. 24.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth; iii. 262.

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magistrates of the two counties who were present at Manchester on the 16th, "the great satisfaction derived by His Royal Highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures for the preservation of the public tranquillity." Lord Sidmouth's defence of the course he thus took is stated as follows by his biographer:—"Lord Sidmouth was aware that this proceeding would subject ^{Ibid.} him to the charge of precipitation; but he was acting upon what he considered an essential principle of government—namely, to acquire the confidence of the magistracy, especially in critical times, by showing a readiness to support them in all honest, reasonable, and well-intended acts, without inquiring too minutely whether they might have performed their duty a little better or a little worse. So impressed was his lordship with the importance of this principle, that he constantly declared in after life, that, had the question recurred, he should again have pursued a course, the policy of which was not less obvious than its justice. If, indeed, the Government had left those magistrates exposed to the storm of popular indignation until the verdict against Hunt and his associates in the succeeding year had demonstrated the legality of their conduct,* the magistracy at large must, from the dread of abandonment, have failed in duty towards that royal authority, which either could not or would not stand by them in the hour of peril; and thus, in all probability, the most calamitous consequences would have ensued." It would appear, however, that, although the Home Secretary had the concurrence of his colleagues in the step which he took, they were not unanimous in adopting the view upon which he acted. Mr. Twiss has published a remarkable letter of Lord Eldon's to his brother, Sir William Scott, without date, but evidently written about this time, in which his lordship says: "Without all doubt the Manchester magistrates must be supported; *but they are very generally blamed here. For my part, I think if the assembly was only an unlawful assembly, that task will be difficult enough in sound reasoning.* If the meeting was an overt act of treason, their justification is complete." Eldon, who goes on to say that he was clearly of opinion that the meeting was an overt act of treason, and that the previous Birmingham meeting was the same—his argument being, as he afterwards stated it in the House of Lords, "that numbers constituted force, and force terror, and terror illegality"—pressed for having the prisoners indicted for treason, but was, as we have seen, overruled. It was, it seems, on the 25th that Lord Sidmouth informed the Regent that the evidence against Hunt and his associates "did not afford sufficient ground for proceeding against them for high treason; but that it fully warranted a prosecution for a treasonable conspiracy, which would be instituted immediately, in order that the bill of indictment might be presented to the grand jury at the ensuing summer assizes for the county of Lancaster." This was done accordingly, and true bills were found against Hunt and nine others.

Life of Lord Eldon; ii. 338.

Life of Lord Sidmouth; iii. 263.

Meanwhile the utmost excitement had been produced by the proceedings at Manchester all over the country. On the 22nd, immediately on reading the newspaper account, Sir Francis Burdett addressed a public letter to the electors of Westminster, denouncing the conduct of the magistrates in the most

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* The legality of the conduct of the Manchester magistrates was not one of the questions at issue on Hunt's trial, nor of course was it either demonstrated or noticed in any way whatever in the verdict on that occasion.

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unmeasured terms. For this the Attorney-General immediately proceeded against him by an *ex officio* information for libel. Meetings, at which strong resolutions against both the magistrates and the Government were passed, were held in all parts of the kingdom. An address in this spirit, presented to the Regent in the beginning of September, from the Common Council of the city of London, drew from His Royal Highness a reply, in which he told its authors that he received their Address with deep regret, and that they appeared to know little or nothing either of the circumstances which preceded the late meeting at Manchester or of those which attended it. This, however, did not prevent addresses to the same effect, some more some less strongly expressed, being sent in from Westminster, Norwich, York, Bristol, Liverpool, Nottingham, and many other towns. Of the county meetings the most remarkable was that of the county of York, which was held on the 14th of October, and at which 20,000 persons were supposed to have been present. Among those who signed the requisition to the High Sheriff was Earl Fitzwilliam, and his lordship was also present at the meeting; for which acts, as they were considered, of open opposition to the Government, he was immediately dismissed from his office of Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding. Before this the Duke of Hamilton, Lord Lieutenant of the county of Lanark, had sent a subscription of fifty pounds to the committee for the relief of the Manchester sufferers, accompanied by a letter, in which he expressed the alarm that had been excited in his mind by the manner in which the meeting of the 16th of August had been interrupted. There were not, however, wanting some addresses and declarations on the other side from the smaller towns and counties; and a few associations for raising troops of yeomanry in aid of the civil power were formed in Scotland and in the north of England. The grand jury of the county of Lancaster also threw out a number of bills presented to them against individuals belonging to the Manchester yeomanry for cutting and maiming with intent to kill in St. Peter's Field; and the proceedings of an inquest which sat for nine days at Oldham on the body of one of the persons killed at the meeting, after having been characterized by every species of irregularity and confusion, were at last quashed by the Court of King's Bench. On the whole, the disposition of the classes possessed of property still was generally to rally around and support the Government, even although the more reflecting among them might not see reason to approve of every thing that had been done in the contest with the democratical party. The opinion of one class of the ministerial adherents may be considered to be expressed in a passage of one of Mr. Ward's Letters, written from Paris in the beginning of October:—"What do reasonable people think of the Manchester business? I am inclined to suspect that the magistrates were in too great a hurry, and that their loyal zeal, and the *nova gloria in armis*, tempted the yeomanry to too liberal an use of the sabre—in short, that their conduct has given some colour of reason to the complaints and anger of the Jacobins. The approbation of Government was probably given as the supposed price of support from the Tories in that part of the country."

Letters of the
Earl of Dudley,
p. 230.

TEMPER OF THE
PEOPLE.

But in that portion of the population where sympathy with the radical reform agitation was naturally the most strongly felt and the most widely diffused, the only feeling produced by the attack on the Man-

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chester meeting appears to have been one of the keenest exasperation and thirst for revenge. There was no diminution of the audacity which had hitherto characterized the reform movement. Large meetings of the working classes were held in rapid succession in all the manufacturing districts, at which the most inflammatory speeches were delivered and the most daring resolutions passed. It was evident that a more resolute and dangerous spirit than ever had been awakened in the popular mind. Yet it is worthy of remark that no attempt was any where made by the authorities to repeat the course which had been taken by the Manchester magistrates, unless we are to except an uncalled-for interference with a meeting held about the middle of September at Paisley, which produced a state of disturbance and riot that lasted for three days, and, having extended to Glasgow, was not put down without the military having been called out and employed in both towns. All the other meetings that were held both assembled and dispersed in peace. But the state of feeling that every where prevailed among the operatives was such as excited the greatest anxiety and apprehension. The communications received by Government represented the country as being almost on the eve of an insurrection. Indeed Ministers were led at one time to believe that a plan had been arranged for a general rising on a particular day (the 1st of November). The facts may have been exaggerated in many cases by design or by fear; but that the popular temper was in a highly combustible and alarming state there can be no doubt.

DELIBERATIONS
OF GOVERNMENT.Life of Lord Sid-
mouth; iii. 228.Life of Lord El-
don; ii. 337.Life of Lord Sid-
mouth; iii. 280, &c.SESSION OF
PARLIAMENT.

A dissatisfaction with the existing laws for the repression of sedition was one of the first feelings inspired in Ministers and many of their adherents by the events of the 16th of August at Manchester. So early as on the 19th of that month Lord Redesdale, in a letter to Lord Sidmouth, while maintaining the very strong doctrine that "every meeting for radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution of government by bringing it into hatred and contempt, but was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of government, including the King as its head," admits that "something more explicit was now required," and suggests that a declaratory law should be passed "to remove all doubt of the treasonable criminality of such assemblies." About the same time we find Lord Eldon writing to his brother: "In fact the of state our law is so inapplicable to existing circumstances, that we can't meet the present case; and I am as convinced as I am of my existence, that, if Parliament don't forthwith assemble, there is nothing that can be done but to let those meetings take place, reading the Riot Act if there be a riot at any of them." Lord Sidmouth accordingly, early in September, proposed to Lord Liverpool that Parliament should be assembled as soon as possible. The Premier was then opposed to the suggestion; a Cabinet Council, which met on the 15th of September, came to no decision; another, which met on the 21st, decided against Sidmouth's views; but at a third meeting, on the 8th of October, an order for the assembling of Parliament on the 23rd of November was agreed upon.

The session was accordingly opened on that day by the Prince Regent in person. Amendments to the Address were moved by the Opposition in both Houses, and long debates ensued, that in the Commons extending over two nights and till five o'clock in the morning of the third day; but the minis-

1819. terial majorities on the division were 159 to 34 in the Lords, and 381 to 150 in the Commons. A collection of papers relative to the internal state of the country having then been presented by command of the Prince Regent, four bills were introduced in the Lords on the 29th of November; one by the Lord Chancellor, entitled "An Act to prevent Delay in the Administration of Justice in Cases of Misdemeanour;" the three others by Lord Sidmouth, entitled severally, "An Act to prevent the Training of Persons to the Use of Arms, and to the Practice of Military Evolutions and Exercise;" "An Act for the more effectual Prevention and Punishment of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;" and "An Act to authorize Justices of the Peace, in certain disturbed Counties, to seize and detain Arms collected and kept for Purposes dangerous to the Public Peace; to continue in force until the 25th of March, 1822." On the 3rd of December, Lord Castlereagh introduced in the Commons a bill entitled "An Act to subject certain Publications to the Duties of Stamps upon Newspapers, and to make other Regulations for restraining the Abuses arising from the Publication of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;" and on the 17th of that month, Lord Sidmouth introduced in the Lords a bill entitled "An Act for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; to continue in force until the end of the session of Parliament next after five years from the passing of the Act." These measures, which became memorable under the designation of the Six Acts, were strenuously resisted at every stage; but they were all eventually passed. Both Houses then adjourned, on the 29th of December, to the 15th of February, 1820.

DEATH OF
GEORGE III.,
29th Jan. 1820.

In this interval an event occurred, without occasioning any change whatever except only of certain names and forms, which, if it had happened twenty or even fifteen years before, might possibly have given a new movement to the whole political system of this country and of Europe. Yet it was not without a momentary pause of solemn and even somewhat tender emotion that all ranks of the people received the announcement that the old King was no more. After a seclusion of nearly ten years, George the Third died at Windsor, on the evening of Saturday the 29th of January, 1820, in the eighty-second year of his age and the sixtieth of his reign. The death of His Majesty had been preceded by that of his fourth son, the Duke of Kent, in his fifty-third year, on the 23rd of the same month. Thus, within little more than two years, had been taken away the King and Queen, the actual wearers of the crown, the daughter and only child of him by whom it was inherited, and the father of her to whom it was eventually to fall. The birth of that other daughter and only child, our present gracious Sovereign, had taken place on the 24th of May, 1819. In the same year a son had also been born (on the 26th of March) to the Duke of Cambridge; a daughter, who died on the same day (the 27th of March), to the Duke of Clarence; and a son (on the 27th of May) to the Duke of Cumberland.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

FOR some time before the Manchester Massacre of August 1819, there had been a subsidence of the sedition and rebellious intentions of the sufferers and demagogues who had caused a panic to the Government, and a portion of the country magistracy of England and Scotland. The extensive conspiracy supposed by the ruling powers had never existed; and the separate parties of malcontents who had employed the leisure and relieved the painful thoughts of poverty in seditious movements had become tired of fruitless efforts, of disappointment in their leaders, and of that failure in combination which is the invariable lot of the ill-informed and inexperienced when they aim at objects too large for their powers. Their funds fell off; their drillings ceased from non-attendance; and they dropped back into their sad homes, to mutter there their discontents, or wait for better days. But the Manchester affair and the subsequent proceedings roused them again as by an express summons; and during the months of September, October, and November, there was a busy reorganization of the associations of the discontented, who put aside their mutual quarrels to carry on the grand one with the Government. It was in November that Sir Herbert Taylor, who held a high office in the establishment of the King, was accosted at Windsor by a man named Edwards, who kept a small shop at Eton for the sale of plaster casts, and who gave information of a desperate plot against the Ministers. This information was, of course, immediately communicated to Lord Sidmouth. Edwards was taken into the pay of the Home Office; and the police were employed to verify his statements during the months when he stimulated the purposes of the conspirators, and received their confidence, in order to betray them, day by day, to his paymasters. It was after the affair became known to the Government, that an emissary of Oliver the spy appeared at Middleton and elsewhere, and told of other agents who were going about the country with the same commission—to engage the discontented to join in the plot of Thistlewood and his comrades to assassinate the ministers, seize the Bank, the Mansion House, and the Tower, and establish a provisional government. The discontented refused to join. The scheme was too horrible and too foolish. In the end it appeared that the number involved was very small; so small, that the affair would scarcely deserve a place in history, but for the atrocity of the plan, and the illustration the event affords of the working of the spy system adopted by the Government of the day.

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REVIVAL OF SEDITION.

Edinburgh Review, vol. xxxiii. p. 211.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. 3, p. 216.

CATO STREET CONSPIRACY.

Bamford. i. p. 77.

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Annual Register,
1820, p. 29.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 310.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 30.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 317.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 315.

The leader, Thistlewood, was a desperate man; too vindictive about his private wrongs to make much pretence of patriotism. He had been engaged with the Watsons, and acquitted on his trial for that matter. After his acquittal, he had sent a challenge to Lord Sidmouth; and this piece of audacity had procured him a year's imprisonment. He came out of jail thirsting for the blood of the Minister. He drew about him a few ignorant and desperate men; and they would have attempted the deed at once,—in the autumn of 1819,—but for a series of accidents which delayed the enterprise, and gave time for an aggravation of their wickedness by the arts of Edwards the informer. When the affair had been delayed till Christmas, there came the dispersion of the intended victims for the holidays; and then the death of the King and the Duke of Kent, and the royal funerals; and perhaps Edwards, who furnished the party with so much information about the Ministers, might have told the conspirators how uncertain was the tenure of office by their enemies, who were very near going out immediately on the accession of George IV., on account of their refusal to procure him a divorce from his Queen. The first record of the existence of the plot is in a note from the Duke of Wellington of the 5th of January, wherein he states, that he had “just heard that Lord Sidmouth had discovered another conspiracy.” On Saturday, February 19th, it was resolved by the gang to murder the Ministers, each at his own house; and without further delay, as their poverty would not allow them to wait any longer. On the Tuesday, however, Edwards informed them that there was to be a Cabinet dinner at Lord Harrowby's the next day. Thistlewood sent out for a newspaper, to see if this was true; and finding it to be so, remarked, “As there has not been a dinner so long, there will, no doubt, be fourteen or sixteen there; and it will be a rare haul to murder them all together.” Thus it was settled. Some of their number were to watch Lord Harrowby's house, to see that no police or soldiers were brought there. One was to call with a note while the Ministers were at dinner; and the others were then to rush in, to commit the murders, carrying bags in which to bring away the heads of Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh. Then they were to fire the cavalry barracks, by throwing fireballs into the straw sheds: and the Bank and Tower were to be taken by the people, who, it was hoped, would rise upon the spread of the news.

Edwards was not the only traitor. A man named Hidon, who afterwards found himself well-recompensed by the gift of a hackney coach, went from this final council to warn Lord Harrowby, by putting a letter into his hand during his ride in the Park. No notice was apparently taken. The preparations for dinner went on at Lord Harrowby's till eight o'clock in the evening; but the guests did not arrive. The Archbishop of York, who lived next door, happened to give a dinner that evening; and the arrival of the carriages deceived those of the conspirators who were on the watch in the street, till it was too late to give warning to their comrades, who had assembled in a stable in Cato Street, near Edgeware Road.

While the conspirators were arming themselves in a room above this stable, by the light of one or two candles, the Ministers, having dined at home, met at Lord Liverpool's; where they awaited, in great anxiety, the tidings of what the police and soldiers had done. When the news arrived, it was bad. One

of the police had been stabbed through the heart, and Thistlewood had escaped. This was owing to the soldiers not having been ready, as ordered, to turn out at a moment's notice. The police proceeded without them; and Smithers, the man who was killed, mounted the ladder which led from the stable to the upper room. Thistlewood stabbed him, and blew out the light; and after the exchange of a few shots in the darkness and confusion, several of the conspirators escaped. A reward of £1000 was immediately offered for the apprehension of Thistlewood: but he was taken before eight o'clock the next morning, in bed at a friend's house in Moorfields. When about fourteen of the conspirators had escaped, the soldiers arrived, and captured the remainder of the party,—nine prisoners,—and their arms and ammunition.

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On the publication of the Gazette, the next morning, with the proclamation of the reward for the apprehension of Thistlewood, London was thrown into consternation, from the natural supposition that this plot was but the first movement of a great insurrection. But there is no evidence that it ever extended beyond the few desperate men who were immediately concerned in it. The vigilance of the Government and the magistracy throughout the kingdom detected no more schemes of rebellion, though there were flying rumours from time to time of marches of armies of radicals, who were to burn the towns and overturn the throne. Those who are old enough to have a distinct recollection of those times are astonished now to think how great was the panic which could exist without any evidence at all: how prodigious were the radical forces which were always heard of, but never seen: how every shabby and hungry-looking man met on the road was pronounced "a radical:" how country gentlemen, well-armed, scoured the fields and lanes, and met on heaths to fight the enemy who never came: and how, even in the midst of towns, young ladies carried heavy planks and ironing-boards, to barricade windows, in preparation for sieges from thousands of rebels whose footfall was long listened for in vain through the darkness of the night. This imaginary state of the times was used by the alarmists as an argument against popular education (among other purposes to which it was turned): the plea being that the leaders of the radicals, having circulated proclamations, must be able to write; and that this fact sufficiently proved the necessity of keeping the discontented dumb.

Annual Register,
1820, Chron. p. 49.

ALARMS.

On the next Sunday, February 27th, the Ministers publicly returned thanks for their preservation, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The King, who was at Brighton, recovering from his dangerous illness, was supplied daily with a minute account of the proceedings in regard to the conspirators. What he heard seems to have failed to convince him of the true causes and extent of the treasonable schemes of the day; for in the Speech delivered by commission previous to the dissolution of Parliament, on the 13th of March, the following notice is taken of the recent disturbances:—"Deeply as his Majesty laments that designs and practices such as those which you have been recently called upon to repress, should have existed in this free and happy country, he cannot sufficiently commend the prudence and firmness with which you directed your attention to the means of counteracting them. If any doubt had remained as to the nature of those principles by which the peace and happiness of the nation were so seriously menaced, or of the excesses to which they were likely

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 321.Annual Register,
1820, p. 28.THE KING'S
SPEECH.

1820.

to lead, the flagrant and sanguinary conspiracy which has lately been detected must open the eyes of the most incredulous, and must vindicate to the whole world the justice and expediency of those measures to which you thought it necessary to resort, in defence of the laws and constitution of the kingdom."

On the 20th of April, Thistlewood was condemned to death, after a trial of three days: and on the 1st of May, he and his four principal accomplices were executed. Five more who pleaded guilty had their punishment commuted to transportation for life; and one, who appears to have been present at Cato Street without being aware of the object of the meeting, received a free pardon. The question which must next occur to every one is, what became of Edwards?

He was never punished: and to what extent he was rewarded has never been certainly known. That, after having been at the point of starvation, he

was soon able to assist Thistlewood with "some pounds" at need, is known:

and that some of the conspirators attributed their treason to his instigation:

and that he went about giving away hand-grenades and divers weapons of atrocious device, and endeavouring to persuade many persons to blow up the

House of Commons: and that he was not brought forward as a witness in the trials of the conspirators, nor himself ever arrested as a participator in their

designs. On the day after the execution of Thistlewood, Alderman Wood brought forward a motion in the House, in regard to the conduct of this man;

and renewed the subject on the 9th of May, adducing depositions from many persons which had been brought before him in his magisterial capacity,

charging Edwards with the promulgation of horrible schemes for the destruction of the Ministers and the Parliament, and with many direct attempts to

seduce needy men to join in those schemes. The information further showed that he had then been living for six weeks in great affluence, under an assumed

name, in the house of a schoolmaster, in St. George's, Hanover Square, his host having no idea, till informed by Edwards himself, whom he was har-

bouring. No permission, however, was given by Government for justice to overtake this wretch. The Ministerial members enlarged on the necessity of

employing such agency for government purposes in critical times; drew nice distinctions between the offices of spy and informer; disputed about the

amount of Edwards's new affluence; ridiculed Alderman Wood, and his supposition that the Home Office would proceed against Edwards on the depo-

sitions furnished to Lord Sidmouth by magistrates; and finally negatived the motion for a Select Committee, to inquire into the conduct of this acknow-

ledged traitor. From that time Edwards disappeared; and nothing more was heard of him but an occasional rumour that he was living in Ireland, or on the

Continent, in ease and affluence. He escaped punishment from the hands of man: but his case was so flagrant and so universally understood, that probably

no one of the meanest of the sufferers from poverty and ignorance whom he endeavoured to seduce would have exchanged conditions with him, loaded as

his name was with infamy, and his soul with the doom of his victims.

In Scotland, an outbreak occurred this spring. At the end of March, a vague alarm began to spread of some approaching disturbance; and the

peaceable workpeople were visited by commands, from unknown quarters, to cease their work. On Sunday, April 2nd, a treasonable proclamation was

found pasted up on the walls, all through Glasgow, inviting the people to

Annual Register,
1820, p. 32.

Hansard, vol. i.
(Second Series), p.
290.

SPIES AND IN-
FORMERS.
Hansard, i. 51.

Hansard, i. 242.

Hansard, i. 293.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 37.
SEDITION IN SCOT-
LAND.

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effect a revolution, and commanding a cessation of all labour. On the Monday morning everybody stood idle, to see what was going to happen; all, except the people of some cotton-mills, who went to work as usual, but dared not return after breakfast. Nothing ensued, except the calling out of the military, and the preparations of the magistracy for defence, against some attack of whose nature they were, and ever remained, entirely ignorant, for the alarm continued a mystery. Two days afterwards, one of the Stirlingshire Yeomanry was met, near Kilsyth, by a party of armed men, who demanded his weapons. Some shots were exchanged, and the man returned to Kilsyth. A detachment of twenty men was immediately sent out to scour the roads; and they found a party of rebels, about fifty in number, posted on some high ground in Bonnymuir. The rebels made some resistance, but were soon overpowered, some being wounded, and nineteen made prisoners. It appeared that most of these poor creatures had been tempted hither from Glasgow, in the expectation of joining an army of four or five thousand men, who were to take the Carron Iron Works, and thus supply themselves with artillery. On the side of the authorities no death was caused but that of a horse; but the commanding officer and three of his party were wounded. This is the affair which goes by the name of the Battle of Bonnymuir. Numerous arrests were made in various parts of Scotland; but the excitement caused was not great, and soon at an end. In a few days everybody was at work again, as if nothing had happened; and the trials, which took place in July and August, engaged little attention. Of the persons convicted, all were pardoned except three; of these two had been active at Bonnymuir, and the third was one of those reckless agitators who were, at that time, the curse of the suffering classes of society.

It was while the Cato-street conspirators were lying in prison that the leaders of the Manchester movement—Hunt and his companions—underwent their trial, and received sentence. The intervening months had done much to undeceive some of Hunt's followers, as to the character of their leader, and the prospects of any cause entrusted to such hands.

TRIALS OF THE
RADICALS.

In the close intercourse of imprisonment, and preparation for trial, Hunt lost all the attributes of the hero, with which the credulous imaginations of his admirers had invested him when he played the orator. One of these, his fellow-prisoner, declares that he could not endure to entertain an unworthy opinion of any of his comrades, and least of all him who occupied such a position as Hunt's. "I deemed all reformers as good as myself," declares Bamford; "and I knew that I could answer for the sincerity and disinterestedness of my own intentions. It was not until years had elapsed, that observation and reflection enabled me to penetrate the mist which had so long enveloped me; then it was that I became aware of the real nature of past transactions, and of the character of some who had been my political friends and fellow-workers in the cause of reform." The evidence was pretty clear in

Bamford, ii. 73.

the case of Hunt, as soon as he was lodged in Lancaster Castle, where he "gave way to fits of impatience because no one appeared to bail him;" "generally made use of the strongest terms he could, at the moment, command;" and showed "exhibitions of violent feeling." In London, it appeared that, "he became annoying and offensive, and his best friends were sometimes

THE DEMAGOGUE.

Bamford, ii. 5, 41.

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Bamford, ii. 21.

Bamford, ii. 76.

Bamford, ii. 22.

compelled to defend themselves by not being at home." On his return from Lancaster to Manchester, as he sat, "on the box-seat," the hero of the procession, there was that in his manners which made his ingenuous admirer "almost doubt whether he who loved himself so well, could ever really love his country for its own sake." "Hunt continually doffed his hat, waved it lowly, bowed gracefully, and now and then spoke a few kind words to the people; but if some five or ten minutes elapsed without an huzza or two, or the still more pleasing sounds, 'Hunt for ever,' he would rise from his seat, turn round, and cursing poor Moorhouse in limbs, soul, or eyes, he would say, 'Why don't you shout, man? why don't you shout? Give them the hip?'" When the hurra was produced by the "hip" of the panting and hoarse subaltern behind, "he would resume his seat, and the bowing and hat-waving went on as before." On the trial, when the defence was to begin in the afternoon, by which time the audience might probably be weary, Hunt reveals himself again to the humbler defendants: "'Now, Bamford, I'll tell you what you must do, if called this afternoon; you must talk against time.'—'Talk against time! what's that?'"—"You must talk to put on time, in order to prevent them from calling upon me, under any circumstances, to-night.'" Then came the denouncing in court of his friend Carlile, at that time under punishment; and next "the worst thing" his admirer "ever knew him do," slanderer Mrs. Thistlewood. Here was enough: the charm of the mob-orator was dissolved. "At times, I had some difficulty to avoid laughing in Hunt's face; at times I was vexed at being a party in such a piece of contemptible vanity. I contrasted all this glare and noise with the useful results of calm, sober thought, and silent determination; and I made up my mind that, when once out of this, I would not, in future, be a party in such trumpery exhibitions—in the unworthy setting up of the instrument instead of the principle of a great cause." This is but a fair representation of the relation between the demagogue and his followers in all critical times of any state: and if such critical times cannot but arise in every state from the inevitable inequalities of human condition, those have much to answer for who, by needlessly abridging liberty of popular speech and action, stimulate the powers of the demagogue and the passions of the simple and ignorant, who know of no better leader.

Bamford, i. 106.

The simple-minded men who had followed Hunt were surprised, when brought into the presence of the Privy Council, at the actual appearance and manners of the rulers of the land, whom they had regarded as their cruel persecutors. They found no cruelty and ferocity in the faces and demeanour of the tyrants: the "good-looking person in a plum-coloured coat, with a gold ring on the small finger of his left hand, on which he sometimes leaned his head," while eyeing the prisoners—Lord Castlereagh; or the person who addressed them—Lord Sidmouth—"a tall, square, and bony figure upwards of fifty years of age, with thin and rather grey hair, forehead broad and prominent," and whose "mild and intelligent eyes" looked forth from "cavernous orbits;" his "manner affable, and much more encouraging to freedom of speech than" had been expected. Perhaps there was something of the same surprise on the other side. It certainly appears that the prisoners were treated with kindness and respect by the great men they had to deal with, from the

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Home Secretary to the police officials, when the parties were brought face to face. If they could have known each other better beforehand—their feelings, ideas, and interests—perhaps there would have been no Six Acts on the one hand, or Spa Fields and Manchester meetings on the other. As it was, the leaders and comrades of the discontented had to take their trial at York, on the 16th of this month of March, 1820: they were found guilty, and were to appear for judgment, in the Court of King's Bench, at the end of April. They were found guilty of unlawful assembling, for the purpose of moving and inciting to contempt and hatred of the Government; and their sentences were various terms of imprisonment, in different jails, and the giving of large securities for future good behaviour. Hunt spent the next two years and a half in Ilchester jail, whence he sent forth incessant complaints of bad treatment—complaints which may fairly be considered as efforts, natural in such a man, to keep himself in the eye of the world, as his followers appear to have been satisfied with the usage they met with in their several places of confinement. Some of them learned certain lessons, through the experience of their adventures, which enlightened them as to the causes of social evils which they had hoped to remedy by political action. They found, on occasion of the trial, that “among us at York,” “the same really contemptible feeling of classism, the curse of England and Englishmen, and of Englishwomen also, existed in too great a degree among the witnesses. There were the ‘broad cloth’ and the ‘narrow cloth’ ones—the rich and the poor; and the former seldom sought opportunities for intercommunication with the latter, but rather shunned them.” The conclusion drawn is one which it is worth some suffering to arrive at: “first of all, [for men] to respect themselves; next, to invite to a respectful equality by unoffending manners; and thirdly, to assert their right position in society, by withholding the smallest deference to mere assumption. This would be quite sufficient, without rudeness or noise, to restore the natural balance of society.” Such conclusions, arrived at by men whose action is a part of the history of their time, are a worthy subject of historical record.

Bamford, ii. 89.

Bamford, ii. 90.

One other trial, for the seditions of the preceding year, remained—that of Sir Charles Wolseley and a coadjutor, Mr. Harrison, for their conduct and speech at a meeting in favour of Parliamentary Reform, at Stockport, in July, 1819. The sentence was eighteen months' imprisonment, and the giving of securities at the expiration of the term.

With the new reign, new interests opened—interests so general, and admitting of such overt expression, that the spies and secret agitators who had, of late, become the curse of the country, found themselves driven from their diabolical game. They are not traceable among the scenes and movements which were now to engross the mind of the nation, and fix the attention of the world.

CHAPTER II.

1820.

THE one thing that men said to each other, in England and abroad, when they heard the news of the death of George III. was, that never had there been an accession to the throne more merely nominal. The new king had virtually reigned for eight years; his opinions and character, in the office of ruler, were well known; and there would be no change of ministry. There would be a royal funeral, a public mourning, a new parliament, and a new regal title; and that would be all. This saying, which appeared a truism, turned out not to be exactly true.

ACCESSION OF
GEORGE IV.

Anna's Register,
1820, 16, 17.

The King having died on Saturday, January 29th, 1820, the meeting of the Privy Council took place on Sunday, when the new sovereign declared his accession, and took the oaths; and on Monday he was proclaimed. For some days he had been ill; and almost before his proclamation was over, he was in a state of great danger from inflammation of the lungs. During that week there was an expectation that this would prove the shortest reign in English history—the sharpest lesson ever given as to the nearness of the throne to the grave; but after a struggle of nine days, the disease was overcome, and the business of a new reign proceeded.

The demise of the crown having happened during the parliamentary recess, the two Houses, in obedience to the bidding of the law in such cases, met immediately—that is, on the Sunday, when the Lords were sworn in. The Commons had to wait till Monday, for the return to town of the Lord High Steward. After the administration of the oaths, both Houses adjourned to the day after the royal funeral, which was to take place on the 16th of February. During this interval, while people in the streets were talking of the singular quietness and absence of change under this new reign, so that the resignation of Ministers had been a mere form, those Ministers were in daily expectation of being dismissed by their Sovereign, while their heads were in hourly danger from Thistlewood and his gang, whose quarrel with them was as holders of the offices which they believed themselves about to vacate.

POSITION OF THE
QUEEN.

Life of Lord
Chancellor Eldon,
ii. 367.

Life of Lord
Sidmouth, iii. 310.

The King, while yet suspended, as it were, over the grave, was planning to begin life anew. He required peremptorily from his Ministers that they should procure him a divorce; and they, unable to endure the idea of such a scandal, positively refused. On the 13th of February, Lord Sidmouth, in a note to Earl Falbot, in apology for not having written sooner, said: "If you knew how the day was passed, you would not be surprised at the omission. The Government is in a very strange, and, I must acknowledge, in a precarious state." The Ministers remained in office by a compromise on this point which afterwards cost them dear. They induced the King to drop the subject by pointing out the advantage of the Queen remaining quietly abroad, which

she would no doubt do if impunity from divorce were granted her on that condition; and they readily promised to gratify the King's wishes, if she should return to give any trouble. When they gave this promise, they little understood the woman they had to deal with, or the disposition of the English people to succour and protect the unhappy and oppressed, irrespective of the moral merits or demerits of the sufferer.

No pity can be too deep for the misfortunes of all the parties involved in the unhappy marriage which the King was now bent on having dissolved. In the early days when the young Prince of Wales had a heart which might have expanded and warmed under happy domestic influences, his feelings were cruelly dealt with; he was under the common doom of English princes, forbidden to marry where he loved. He was not gratified in his natural wish to travel abroad, where he might possibly have seen some lady included within the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act whom he might have loved. He knew himself to be disliked by his parents; and it was almost inevitable that he should seek solace in an illicit love, and in extravagant pleasures. He loved Mrs. Fitzherbert; and plunged into debt so deep that it caused Parliament two months' debate to settle how he should be extricated. By this debate, and some misunderstandings about his debts, his feelings were exasperated; and it was in a spirit of recklessness that he agreed to marry somebody—anybody—chosen for him by the King. He looked upon his marriage as a State necessity, and as an unavoidable method of getting his debts paid. The King decided that he should marry the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, the second daughter of the King's sister; and commands were sent to Lord Malmesbury, at Hanover, to repair to Brunswick, to ask the Princess Caroline in marriage for the Prince of Wales. No discretion was allowed to Lord Malmesbury—no time for observation—no opportunity for making any cautionary representations. All was considered settled before the negotiator saw the poor young creature who thought herself the most fortunate of princesses. "All the young German princesses had learned English, in hopes of being Princess of Wales." The tale of this courtship read now, after the event, is truly sad. The gay flights of the young bird before going into the net, and the closing down of her fate upon her, make the heart ache. "The Princess Caroline much embarrassed," says the Diary, "on my first being presented to her; pretty face—not expressive of softness—her figure not graceful. . . . Vastly happy with her future expectations. The Duchess [the mother] full of nothing else—talks incessantly." If this Duchess could, for a single moment, have seen what she had to answer for in her miseducation of her daughter, it might have made her dumb with grief and shame, instead of talkative with triumph; but she was not a woman who could feel responsibility. She was no more able to think and feel on behalf of her daughter, than her brother, the King of England, on behalf of his son; and the wretchedness of their children in marriage was, therefore, assured beforehand. As for the father, the Duke of Brunswick, "he entered fully into her future situation—was perfectly aware of the character of the Prince, and of the inconveniences which would result, almost with equal ill effect, either from his liking the Princess too much or too little. He said of his daughter, 'Elle n'est pas bête,

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KING'S MARRIAGE
IN 1795.Diaries and Correspondence of the
Earl of Malmesbury, iii. 117.

Diaries, iii. 151.

Diaries, iii. 148.

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Diaries, iii. 159.

Diaries, iii. 189.

Diaries, iii. 181.

Diaries, iii. 193.

Diaries, iii. 201.

Diaries, iii. 204.

Diaries, iii. 162.

Diaries, iii. 208.

Diaries, iii. 176.

Diaries, iii. 183.

Diaries, iii. 197.

Diaries, iii. 210.

mais elle n'a pas de jugement—elle a été élevée sévèrement, et il le falloit.' (She is no fool; but she has no judgment. She has been severely brought up; and it was necessary.) He desired me to advise her never to show any jealousy of the Prince." As for this severity of training, Lord Malmesbury certainly thought less well of the method than those who had adopted it. He says, "If her education had been what it ought, she might have turned out excellent; but it was that very nonsensical one that most women receive—one of privation, injunction, and menace." And how had it issued? Her father observes, "That his daughter writes very ill, and spells ill, and he was desirous that this should not appear." Princess Caroline very *missish* at supper. I much fear these habits are irrecoverably rooted in her. She is naturally curious and a gossip; she is quick and observing, and she has a silly pride of finding out everything." "Argument with the Princess about her toilette. She piques herself on dressing quick; I disapprove this. She maintains her point. I, however, desire Madame Busche to explain to her" what a neat toilette is. "She neglects it sadly, and is offensive from this neglect." "It is remarkable how amazingly, on this point, her education has been neglected, and how much her mother, although an Englishwoman, was inattentive to it." While such was her training, her natural qualities were good; and if they had had fair scope in private life, would have made her happy and beloved. "Next to Princess Caroline at table," says the Diarist. "She improves very much on a closer acquaintance; cheerful, and loves laughing." On board ship, "impossible to be more cheerful, more accommodating, more everything that is pleasant, than the Princess; no difficulty, no childish fears, all good-humour." A pregnant remark in this Diary strikes the reader now as the sentence of her doom. "Walk with Sir B. Boothby. We regret the apparent facility of the Princess Caroline's character, her want of reflection and *substance*; agree that with a *steady* man she would do vastly well, but with one of a different description there are great risks." And while the Princess was "vastly happy with her future expectations," the King of England was writing to her mother that he hoped his niece would not have too much liveliness, and that she would lead a sedentary and retired life. "These words shock the Princess Caroline," Lord Malmesbury says. She heard of some other things, too, which had a sobering effect: "It put a curb on her desire for amusement—a drawback on her situation, and made her feel that it was not to be all one of roses."

How wretched it was to be, was too plain in a moment to the only witness of the first interview, Lord Malmesbury. The Princess kneeled, as she had been instructed, and the Prince raised her "gracefully enough." He instantly left her; and before she had seen any other member of the family, vented to the Queen his dislike of the young stranger whom he was to make his wife in three days. She, meantime, left thus alone, "was in a state of astonishment," and inquired whether the Prince was always like this. She had but too much reason to know soon that, to her, he was to be always like this. Meantime, she found him very fat, and not nearly so good-looking as his portrait. Her only friend in England reports, that "she was disposed to farther criticisms on this occasion, which would have embarrassed me very

much to answer, if luckily the King had not ordered me to attend him." A more desolate creature than he left behind him never claimed pity from the lowliest who has any one to love.

The marriage ceremony took place three days after. Lord Malmesbury records that "the Prince was very civil and gracious; but I thought I could perceive he was not quite sincere, and certainly unhappy; and as a proof of it, he had manifestly had recourse to wine or spirits."

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Such was the marriage which the husband desired, as soon as he became King, to have dissolved. From the beginning he had attached his wife by no conjugal qualities; he had never respected her rights or considered her feelings; and it was, doubtless, a great relief to both when she went abroad to live—a step which she had taken some years before, in 1814. Careless as he had been of her rights and her feelings, he watched her conduct; and when rumours spread of infidelity on her side, he sent abroad, in 1818, a Commission to collect evidence, and to observe her proceedings. It is not to be wondered at, if one who could not be made to understand anything of feminine reserve or royal dignity while yet in her father's house, should lay herself open to the criticism, both of enemies and ordinary observers, when her womanly feelings had, for a course of years, been outraged, and her genial affections repressed; when she had been long deserted by her husband, and separated from her child. Abroad, she escaped from the heartless set among whom she was doomed to dwell at home; and she enjoyed, the more by contrast, the freedom of continental manners. Whatever might be the truth about the extent of her indiscretions, her freedom was certainly more than her chief enemy, her husband, chose to permit. Their only child was dead, and now he was eager to render himself free for another marriage.

Diaries, i.i. 213.

The wife was not unprepared for the persecution which now awaited her; for she had had more than one taste of it already. She had been sent to reside at Blackheath, in her early marriage days, in a sort of Court banishment; and there her most trivial proceedings were watched, and, at length, her servants were brought up before the Lords charged with "the delicate investigation,"—and closely examined, without any previous warning to their mistress or themselves. She was declared innocent of all serious offence; and the King, her father-in-law, would have invited her to Court: but her husband would not hear of such an atonement. According to all the testimony of the time, she conducted herself extremely well under these trying circumstances.

Mr. Perceval was her adviser at that time; and at that time, he made a mistake very injurious to her and to himself. He collected and had printed all the documents connected with the "delicate investigation," probably in the hope of damaging the Prince and his friends: but he presently perceived that the step would injure no one more than the woman whose name had already been so cruelly abused. A copy of "the Book," as it was called, was stolen off his table one day; and he had to pay bribes to the amount of £10,000 before he could be sure of its being suppressed. The wisest thing the Princess could now have done, would have been to remain on the spot where she had been justified. But her life was intolerably irksome to her; and she went abroad in 1814, against the advice of her friends, in the hope of breathing more freely.

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But a watch was set on her there too. Sir John Leach, first law adviser to the Prince, declared that in order to prepare for a divorce suit, certain competent persons should be sent to Italy, to collect evidence there against the Princess; and a Commission was accordingly appointed, under the sanction of Lords Eldon and Liverpool, to carry on another "delicate investigation,"—but, this time, without the knowledge of the accused. It was this Milan Commission which supplied the evidence on which, at last, the prosecution proceeded; evidence which was scouted by the common sense and decency of all England.

THE QUEEN
ABROAD.

As the time approached when the Princess was likely to become Queen of England, indications were given of the treatment she would receive at that crisis. Our ambassadors abroad were instructed to prevent her admission at foreign courts, by refusing to countenance any such admission. They were not to afford her any official reception, or recognition whatever: and at home, the last insult was offered her, by the omission of her name from the Liturgy, when that of her husband took its place there as King. But for this, she might probably have remained abroad, and given no further trouble. The Ministers consented to this omission; and thereby destroyed the effect of their compromise with the King. Their object was to avoid the scandal of a public prosecution, which they were aware would bring the Crown into contempt; and yet to avoid recognising her as a Queen who could preside over a court. They did not know the spirit of the English people, or they would have seen that the Crown could not be more degraded than by the persecution of a woman, by excluding her from the public prayers of the nation. By this act, they at once created that peculiar interest which is beautifully indicated by the saying of Mr. Denman, that if she had her place in the Prayer-book at all, it was in the prayer for "all that are desolate and oppressed." The news of this insult reached her in Italy; and she immediately wrote to Lord Liverpool, to demand the insertion of her name in the Liturgy, and announce her intention of returning to England.

THE QUEEN'S RE-
TURN, June 1820

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 254.

She came. The Ministers were bound by their promise to the King to obtain a divorce. "Her promptitude and courage," observes Mr. Ward, "confounded her opponents, and gained her the favour of the people. Whatever one may think of her conduct in other respects, it is impossible not to give her credit for these qualities." There seemed to be nothing left for her to do but to throw herself upon the hearts of the people of England, unless she chose to acquiesce in an imputation of infamy. In Rome, the guard of honour appropriated to her as Queen of England, was refused to her by Cardinal Gonsalvi, on the ground of her non-recognition at home. The Emperor of Austria had before declined receiving any kind of visit from her; and she found herself an outcast wherever any intercourse with the British Court existed. She had no course but to admit herself guilty, or come home, and meet the consequences.

The first queenly honours she received were from the garrison of Dover, whose commandant, having been served with no orders to the contrary, of course offered the customary salute. Her landing took place on Tuesday, the 6th of June. An immense multitude, in holiday dress, received her with acclamations, when she set foot on English ground, after an absence of six

years. An Address was presented to her by the inhabitants of Dover, that evening; and her reply, which pleased them, flew over the country, which was eager to catch her first words. She declared herself happy to find herself again in the bosom of a noble and generous nation; and expressed her hope that the time would come when she should be permitted to do what she could to promote the happiness of her husband's subjects. Her journey to London and her progress through the streets were one continued triumph; and the shouts of the multitude who thronged Pall Mall must have been heard through every corner of the palace where her husband sat meditating his plans for her degradation. His mind could not have been more full of the contemplation than was that of almost every subject in his kingdom. "This scandalous history," writes Mr. Ward, just after that time, "holds *entire* possession of men's minds, to the discredit, as well as the disadvantage of the country. Brougham's proposition, yesterday, seems a reasonable one, that certain days should be set apart for transacting the real business of the country." The "discredit," the immoral influence, the obstruction to the public business, are imputable to the King, and those who had pledged themselves to support his proceedings, and who had driven a desolate creature so hard that she could not but turn to meet her pursuers. Lord Eldon talked of his conscience, as usual; while its operation seemed rather extraordinary to observers like Lord Dudley, in whose letters we find a remark on "the example of the present Lord Chancellor, who having kept her conscience then, keeps her offended husband's now—and all for the public good!"

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Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 256.

From the moment of the announcement of the Queen's approach, the cabinet councils had been frequent and protracted. The Ministers met twice in a day, and remained in consultation for hours. While the multitude on the beach at Dover were shouting their welcome, the King was going in state to the House of Lords, which was unusually crowded, to give the Royal Assent to several bills already passed by his new Parliament; and after he had withdrawn, the expected communication from him was read by the Lord Chancellor from the woolsack. By this Royal Message, the King commended to the Lords an inquiry into the conduct of the Queen, in order to the adoption of "that course of proceeding which the justice of the case, and the honour and dignity of his Majesty's crown, may require." Lord Liverpool then laid on the table the green bag which contained the papers criminatory of the Queen. Lord Castlereagh offered the green bag, and read the King's Message, to the other House. The Lords received the communication in silence, and adjourned, understanding that their address in reply to the Message should be considered the next day. In the House of Commons, there was some vehement speaking; and before Lord Castlereagh moved the address, the next day, Mr. Brougham read to the House a message from the Queen, declaring that her return to England was occasioned by the necessity her enemies had laid upon her of defending her character; declaring that for the fourteen years which had elapsed since she was first accused, she had steadily required the justice of a full investigation of her conduct; and demanding now a public inquiry, instead of that secret investigation before a Select Committee which was proposed by the Ministers. "She relies," said the message, "with full confidence upon

KING'S MESSAGE,
June 6th.
Hansard, i. p. 871.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 144.

QUEEN'S MESSAGE,
June 7th.

1820.

the integrity of the House of Commons, for defeating the only attempt she has any reason to fear."

Hansard, i. 906.

Annual Register,
1820, Chron. 113.

Mr. Brougham took the management of the Queen's business as her Attorney General. He had been recognised in this office, as Mr. Denman was in that of Solicitor General to the Queen, in the Court of Chancery, the Vice Chancellor's Court, and the Court of King's Bench, on the 20th of April preceding. Mr. Brougham had met the Queen in France, on her approach; and from this time, her affairs were under the guidance of himself and Mr. Denman. They were her Commissioners, as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh were those of the King, in the negotiation which was now entered upon, after the appointment of the Secret Committee of Inquiry in the House of Lords, in the hope of obviating the painful and demoralizing investigation which had been proposed to both Houses of Parliament.

COMMISSION
AGREED TO.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 374.

It was the Queen, who, after a pause, first proposed this negotiation. As a preliminary step, she required and obtained full assurance that her doing so could not be interpreted as an act of quailing or retreat. The Commissioners met, and agreed on the basis of their negotiation—that the Queen should not be held to admit, nor the King to retract, anything. Of course, the failure of the negotiation was included in the very terms of this basis. The Queen was willing to live abroad; and the King would agree to drop all proceedings against her: but she required two things which the King's Commissioners refused to grant—the insertion of her name in the Liturgy, or some equivalent which would save her honour; and a reception at foreign courts befitting her rank. She would even have been satisfied with such a reception at some one foreign court, where she would fix her abode. On the King's part, it was offered that at some one foreign court it should be officially notified that she was legally Queen of England; leaving the question of her reception or exclusion to the pleasure of that court. As all the world knew that she was legally Queen of England, and as her exclusion from all foreign courts would inevitably follow from the discountenance at home, this proposal was naturally regarded by herself and her advisers as a mockery; and the negotiation was, on the 19th of June, announced to Parliament to have failed.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 166.

Hansard, i. 1228.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 174.

It was now clear that the investigation must proceed. Some attempts were made by the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Wilberforce, to stop it, by entreating the Queen, under the assurance of the protection of her honour by the Commons, to yield the point of the insertion of her name in the Liturgy: but the deputation who waited on her for the purpose of presenting the entreaty were groaned at by the crowds in the street, and the Queen's courteous refusal was acceptable to the people. These proceedings were of benefit to her cause, and her position was now much improved. Her recognition as Queen of England was avowed by the transactions of the Commission; and next, the protection of the House of Commons had been tendered to her, in lieu of justice, and had been declined. She was now, in the eyes of the whole world, a Queen, a claimant for justice, as well as an accused woman, summoned to trial. On the motion of Lord Castlereagh, the House of Commons, on Monday, June 26th, adjourned the business of the green bag and the Royal Message, to Friday, July 7th, that it might be seen whether the Lords

Hansard, i. 1349.

would in the meantime institute any proceedings. It would be indecent and inconvenient if the two Houses should be pursuing the same investigation at the same time. The Upper House was the fitter one for the business; and the Commons were anxious to avoid meddling with it till they should be called upon to consider any bill sent down to them by the Lords.

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The Secret Committee of the Lords made its Report on the 4th of July. The Report declared that the evidence affecting the honour of the Queen was such as to require, for "the dignity of the Crown, and the moral feeling and honour of the country," a "solemn inquiry," which might "be best effected in the course of a legislative proceeding, the necessity of which," the Committee declared, "they cannot but most deeply deplore." The Queen the next day declared, by petition to the Lords, her readiness to defend herself, and prayed to be heard by counsel, in order to detail some weighty matters, which it was necessary to state in preparation for the inquiry. Her petition was refused; and Lord Liverpool proceeded to propose the Bill of Pains and Penalties which is the everlasting disgrace of his administration. The Bill was entitled "An Act to deprive her Majesty, Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth." It charged the Queen with improper and degrading conduct generally, during her residence abroad, and particularly with an adulterous connexion with a menial servant, named Bartolomeo Bergami: and provided for her degradation and divorce. It was read a first time, and copies were ordered to be sent to the Queen, and to her Attorney and Solicitor General. The next day, her Majesty offered to the House of Lords her protest, and a renewed prayer to be heard by counsel. Her counsel were called in, and instructed to confine themselves to the subject of the mode of procedure under the Bill. The substance of their demand was that the whole business, if not dropped, should be proceeded with, without any delay, to a final issue. Mr. Brougham declared that her Majesty "was clamorous" for this.

LORDS' REPORT,
July 4th.

Hansard, ii. 168.

Hansard, ii. 212.

BILL OF PAINS
AND PENALTIES.Annual Register,
Appendix, 967.

The second reading of the Bill was fixed for the 17th of August: and it was at this stage that the Attorney General adduced the charges on the part of the Crown, and followed them up by the testimony of witnesses. From this day to the 8th of September, the House of Lords was occupied with the testimony offered on behalf of the Bill. And it was not only that House that was thus occupied. Nothing else was heard of throughout the country;—one might almost say throughout Europe. From day to day, indecent tales were told by a party of Italian domestics,—tales such as, at other times, are only whispered by the dissolute in private, and are never offered to the eye or ear of the moral and modest who compose the bulk of the English nation. These tales were now translated by interpreters at the bar of the House of Lords, given in full in the newspapers, and spread through every town, hamlet and lone house within the four seas. The advisers of the King said much of what the Queen had done for the tainting of public morals and the degradation of the dignity of the Crown; but it was plain to most people then, and it is to every one now, that nothing that was in her power to do, if she had been all that her prosecutors declared, could have so injured public morals and degraded the Crown as the

QUEEN'S TRIAL,
August 17th.

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UNFEARINESS OF
MINISTERS.Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 386.Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 386.Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 376.Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 330.Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 333.

King's conduct in pursuit of his divorce. If he had obtained it, it would have been at the cost of a responsibility towards his people, the weight of which could have been borne by no man worthy to occupy a throne.

That such a responsibility was duly felt by the Sovereign we have no evidence. That his Ministers were truly wretched at this time, we know from the correspondence of some of them which has since been published to the world ; but they ascribed their suffering to the supposed disloyalty and changed temper of the English people ; and do not appear to have been at all sensible that any blame attached to the Government. The Lord Chancellor writes to his correspondents of his success in preserving the peace of his conscience, and receives his unpopularity as an honourable martyrdom. When he went down to his country seat at Encombe, the people, even in his own neighbourhood, shouted into his coach "Queen Caroline for ever !" When the Queen's friends were negotiating for a house for her, next to his, he never doubted that it was "for the express purpose of annoying me : " and cleverly bought it up without much danger of too large a sacrifice. "The purchase-money is large, but I have already had such offers, that I shall not, I think, lose by it." He "had a teasing day," when the Queen's first petition was presented to the Lords : the Queen sent to him to say she was coming ; and he replied that he could not, as Speaker, admit ladies during the debates without leave. Then he declined to deliver a message from her ; and then her petition ; and for this last, he says, "Messrs. Grey, Lansdowne, and Holland, abused me pretty handsomely." While his family and friends were guarding him down to the House, the people beset the house of Alderman Wood, the Queen's host, and were on the watch in the parks for the Queen's drives, to take her horses from her carriage, and draw her in triumph : and the illuminations in her honour put the Lord Chancellor's windows in danger. When Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh were walking arm in arm down Parliament Street, amidst the groans and hisses of the mob, Lord Sidmouth observed, "Here we go, the two most popular men in England." "Yes," replied Lord Castlereagh, "through a grateful and admiring multitude." A political friend and former colleague of Lord Sidmouth writes to him at this time, "I cannot describe to you how grievously I suffer, and have suffered, on account of the dangerous and deplorable situation in which our country, the King's government, indeed all of us, have been so long placed—a situation out of which, I profess, I see no satisfactory, indeed no safe, deliverance." To which Lord Sidmouth's reply is, "In venting your feelings, you have precisely expressed mine.—All that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence, in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated. I am, however, much more under the influence of indignation than of any feeling which approaches to despondency." There was, in truth, in a different sense from that which the writer intended, no cause for despondency. There was no cause for despondency in seeing how strong were the feelings of loyalty in England, though they were at present directed towards a Queen under prosecution, instead of a King on the throne. There was no cause for despondency in seeing how sound was the heart of the English people in regard to the weightier matters of the law,—justice and mercy,—strong as is the tendency generally to visit such offences as those now in question more severely on

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women than on men. Though it was inevitably a question universally discussed, whether the person arraigned was guilty or not, the sympathies of the people did not depend upon the answer. Those who regarded the Queen as a wholly innocent victim, and those who believed her driven into guilt by her wrongs, joined hand in hand to draw her carriage, and strove who should cheer the loudest as she passed.

That summer is distinct in the memory of those who were then of mature age. It was a season of extreme heat. Horses dropped dead on the roads, and labourers in the fields. Yet along the line of the mails, crowds stood waiting in the burning sunshine for news of the trial, and horsemen galloped over hedge and ditch to carry the tidings. In London, the Parks and the West-end streets were crowded every evening; and through the bright nights of July, neighbours were visiting one another's houses to lend newspapers, or compare rumours. The King was retired within his palace, unable to come forth without danger of meeting the Queen, or of hearing cheers in her favour. She had her two o'clock dinner-parties,—“Dr. Parr and a large party,”—now a provincial mayor,—now a country baronet,—now a popular clergyman,—came up to tender his own homage and that of his neighbours:—and then came the appearance to the people in an airing; and on other days, the going down to the House of Lords. Elsewhere were the Italian witnesses,—guarded like a gang of criminals as they went to and fro: pelted and groaned at wherever they were seen; driven fast to back doors of the House of Lords, and pushed in, as for their lives. Within the House,—there was the earnest attention of the Lords to the summing up of the Solicitor General (Copley), previous to the production of the witnesses, the rushing out to see the eclipse when the pith and marrow of the matter were disposed of, and the rushing back presently during the mingling of his voice at the close with the sound of “the drums and flourish, announcing the Queen's arrival:”—and then, the reception of her Majesty, all standing as she entered and took her seat as hitherto, on “the crimson chair of state, three feet from the bar:”—and then the swearing in of the interpreter, and the introduction of the first witness,—at whose entrance the Queen was looking another way, but on perceiving whom, she uttered an inarticulate exclamation, and hastily retired.—She had nothing to fear from this witness, however; for his evidence was, on the face of it, so ludicrously untrustworthy, that his name, Majocchi, became a joke throughout the country. The poor wretch was an admirable theme for the mob outside, in the intervals between their exhortations to the guards, and the peers, and all who passed to the House, to “remember their Queen,”—“remember their sisters,” their “wives,” their “daughters.” Then there was the perplexity of underlings how to act. The sentinels at Carlton Palace, “after a momentary pause, presented arms,” as her Majesty's carriage passed: “the soldiers at the Treasury did not.” Daily was the fervent “God bless her!” repeated ten thousand times, from the nearest housetop to the farthest point of vision: and daily did the accused appear “exhausted by fatigue and anxiety,” on returning from hearing, or being informed of, the disgusting charges, the time for replying to which had not yet arrived. Those who remember that July and August, when men's minds were fevered with passion

Annual Register,
1820, Chron. 245.

Annual Register,
Chron. 332.

Annual Register,
Appendix, 956.

Annual Register,
Chron. 380.

Annual Register,
Chron. 381.

Annual Register,
Chron. 383.

1820.

Annual Register,
Chron. 245.
THE DEFENCE,
October 3rd

or enthusiasm, and the thermometer was ranging from 80° to 90° in the shade, can always be eloquent about the summer of 1820.

On the 9th of September, her Majesty's counsel applied for and obtained an adjournment to Tuesday, the 3rd of October. The defence consisted of attempts, generally successful, to overthrow the credit of the witnesses against the accused, and in bringing forward testimony in favour of her conduct and manners while abroad. On the 2nd of November, the arguments of counsel on both sides being concluded, the Lords proceeded to discuss the question of the second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. The division was taken on Monday the 6th; when the majority in favour of the second reading was only 28, in a House of 218. On the third reading, which took place four days afterwards, the majority was reduced to 9. Such a result in this House, the stronghold of ministerial power, at once showed the Government that it must yield: and that it would yield, "considering the state of public feeling, and the division of sentiment just evinced by their Lordships," Lord Liverpool announced on the spot. The King's ministers had come to the determination not to proceed further with the measure.

Hansard, iii. p.
1698.
Hansard, iii. p.
1744.

Hansard, iii. 1746.
ABANDONMENT OF
THE BILL. No-
vember 10th.

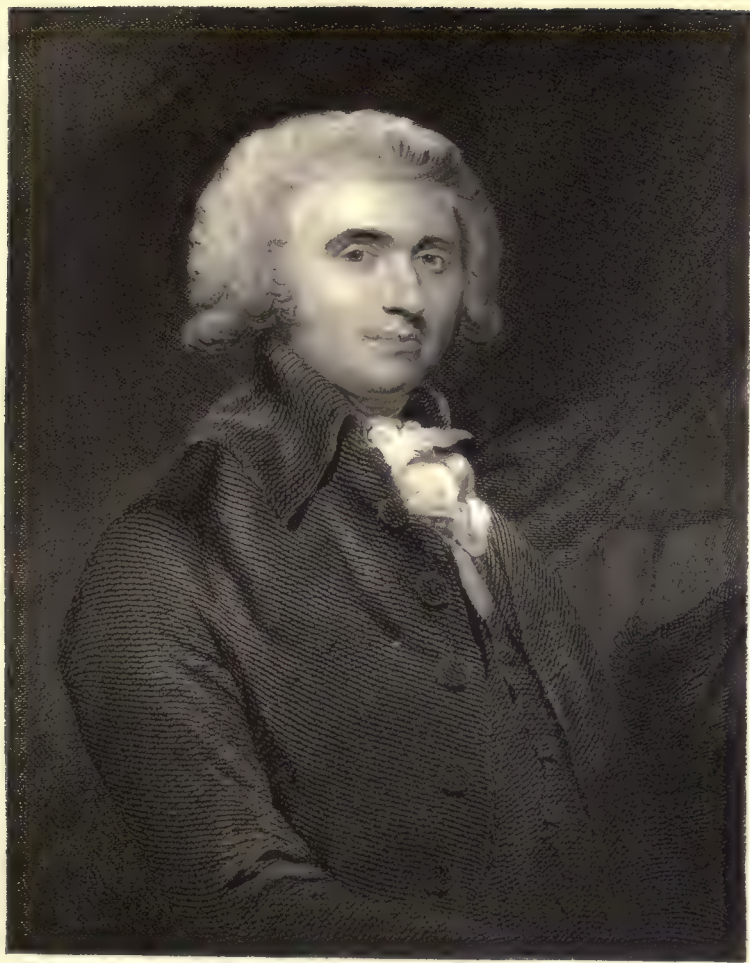
The joy which spread through the country with the news of the abandonment of the Bill was beyond the scope of record. Among the generality of persons, who did not look beyond the interest of the particular case, the escape of the Queen was a matter of congratulation: but to this, persons of more reflection, and a more comprehensive knowledge added a deeper joy. They felt as Lord Erskine did when he burst forth with his rejoicing on the announcement of the abandonment of the Bill. "My life, whether it has been for good or for evil, has been passed under the sacred rule of the law. In this moment I feel my strength renovated by that rule being restored. The accursed change wherewithal we had been menaced has passed over our heads. There is an end of that horrid and portentous exorcism of a new law, retrospective, iniquitous, and oppressive: and the constitution and scheme of our polity is once more safe. My heart is too full of the escape we have just had, to let me do more than praise the blessings of the system we have regained." In the midst of

Hansard, iii. 1747.

THE QUEEN'S LAW-
OFFICERS.

the enthusiasm, the law-officers of the Queen became the idols of the nation. In the face of the world they were the champions of an oppressed woman: and the thoughtful saw in them also the defenders of the Constitution which the Lord Chancellor was daily talking about, but not at this time taking the best care of: the defenders of the dignity of law which, as Mr. Ward said on the present occasion, "outsteps its just functions when it interferes to punish misconduct" (granting the guilt, for argument's sake) "that has been provoked by outrage, and facilitated by neglect." And nowhere could there be a difference of opinion about the disinterestedness and courage of Mr. Brougham and Mr. Denman. Friend and foe could not but see how they exposed themselves to the displeasure of the Court and Government, and to all the consequences of that displeasure, for a term too long for calculation. There appeared every probability that they would suffer professionally for their advocacy of the Queen's cause, through the present reign, and the one which was to succeed; for the Dukes of York and Clarence voted for the Bill throughout its course. It is a cheering fact in human life that the oppressed, when once his grief is known,

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 265.



TUSKINE

*From the original Picture by 2^d Appner,
in his Majesty's Collection at Windsor.*

By the Appointment of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

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never has to wait long for a champion. The work has never to wait for the workman, in the case of the defence of helplessness, any more than in other matters. And the honour due in each instance is not the less for the certainty that it will be claimed. These gentlemen suffered as they expected to do—suffered a long delay of their professional advancement and rewards; but they were not men who, in a free country, could be kept down by royal or official discountenance; and they received first, the esteem and gratitude of the nation, and finally, the prizes of their profession. The occasion was one which, by its appeal to their highest feelings, could not but rouse their intellectual powers to the fullest action; and both of them surpassed all expectation in the conduct of the business. “The display of his power and fertility of mind in this business,” says Mr. Ward of Mr. Brougham, “has been quite amazing; and these extraordinary efforts seem to cost him nothing.”

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Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 268.

Three nights of illumination in London, sanctioned by the Lord Mayor, followed the announcement of the triumph of the Queen's cause. Prince Leopold, the son-in-law of both the royal parties, ordered Marlborough House to be illuminated; and no abode shone more brightly. The witnesses for the prosecution were burned in effigy in the streets; and there was some mobbing of the newspaper-offices which had taken the Government side in the question; but there was no serious breach of the peace.

Annual Register,
1829, Chron. p.
457.

On the 23rd, the Queen sent down a Message to the House of Commons, which Mr. Denman had begun to read, when he was stopped by the summons to the Commons to attend the House of Lords, which preceded the prorogation of Parliament. The contents of the Message were, of course, made known. Her Majesty had declined offers of money and a residence, made by the Government since the dropping of the prosecution; and she commended herself to the House of Commons, for a due provision, and for protection, in case of a resumption, under some other form, of the proceedings against her—an event strongly apprehended by herself, and by some others more fitted to exercise a cool judgment.

Hansard, iii. 1750.
PROROGATION,
November 23rd.

Addresses were presented to the Queen, from all parts of the country, and almost all descriptions of people. On the 29th of November she went in procession to St. Paul's, to return thanks for her deliverance from a great peril and affliction. Her reception was everything that could be wished, as far as the conduct of the vast multitude was concerned; and they did honour to her by the utmost propriety of bearing; but, within the cathedral, we stumble upon an incident characteristic of that time, but scarcely credible in ours. “In the general ‘thanksgiving,’ the officiating clergyman, Mr. Hayes, one of the minor canons of St. Paul's, omitted the particular thanksgiving which, at the request of any parishioner, it is customary to offer up, and which it was understood her Majesty desired might be offered up for her on the present occasion. It is said that Mr. Hayes refused, on the ground that the rubric directs that those may be named as returning thanks who have been previously prayed for; but that the Queen, not having been prayed for, could not be named in the thanksgiving.” Thus the same interdict which deprived her of the prayers of the nation, wrought to prevent her from returning thanks—a privilege which is commonly supposed to be the right of every worshipper within the Christian pale.

QUEEN GOES TO
ST. PAUL'S.
Annual Register,
1820; Chron. 503.

Annual Register,
1820; Chron. 505.

1821.

Hansard, iv.

QUEEN'S CLAIM TO
BE CROWNED,
July 1821.

Annual Register,
1821; Appendix
348.

Annual Register,
1821; Chron. 118.
QUEEN'S DEATH,
August 7, 1821.

Annual Register,
Chron. 121.

The life of this unhappy lady offers but little more for record: for the life itself was drawing to a close. When Parliament met again, the time of the nation was largely occupied, and its temper tried, by discussions on the Queen's affairs, caused by her continued exclusion from public prayers, and by recriminations on the inexhaustible subject of last year's prosecution. An annuity of £50,000 was provided for her, by Act of Parliament; and some attempts were made to obtain for her a share in the honours of the ensuing coronation. It was natural that one so long an outcast, and at length borne back into social life by the sympathies of a nation, should accept too much from those sympathies, and fail to stop at the right point in her demands. It would have been well if the Queen had retired into silence after the grant of her annuity, and the final refusal to insert her name in the Liturgy. Her demand to be crowned with the King was, besides being properly untenable, far from prudent in regard to herself, or humane towards the King. He could not meet her under such circumstances; and the being crowned was not essential to her womanly honour, which was now as much vindicated and protected as it could ever be. Whether the claim to be crowned was or was not a false step in prudence and taste, there can be no doubt that the endeavour to obtain an entrance to the Abbey, to witness the ceremony, was a mistake. The Queen was fairly turned away from the door, amidst contending utterances of derision, sympathy, and indignation at the exclusion. It was a piteous sight; the personages "on the leads," "in grotesque dresses," drawn out of the procession to see the transaction; and the "fashionable ladies," all with tickets, no one stopping to offer hers to the pausing Queen, but all hurrying on, "without taking the slightest notice of her;" the people below, meantime, shouting her name "with great enthusiasm."

This was the last time of her giving trouble to her enemies, or perplexity to the fashionable who crossed her path, or smiles to the people whose hearts warmed towards her. She must have been often and long, if not perpetually, since the accession of the King, in a fever of spirits which could not but wear her frame. The tension of mind which she had now long undergone would have crazed most women, and could not be for ever sustained even by one of "so little substance" and so much versatility as, following Lord Malmesbury's testimony to her early character, we may attribute to her still. Her mortification at the Abbey door happened on the 19th of July; on the 2nd of August a bulletin was issued, which showed that she was seriously ill of internal inflammation. She was in no condition to contend with disease, and, on the 7th, she sank. It is testified that she said, with a mournful earnestness, on that last day, that she had no wish to live: "I do not know whether I shall have to suffer bodily pain in dying; but I shall quit life without any regret." No wonder! And who could wish that she should live? At the best, her future years must have been forlorn. Supposing her conduct, and that of the people towards her, to have been all that could be wished, to the end of a long life, she would still have been a desolate being. To a woman it can never be enough to be a queen—much less to be a nominal queen, under perpetual solicitude for the very name. That her long home opened to her thus early was an event of comfort to those who knew she could never have any other home, or any natural work or food for her domestic affections. Yet the news

of her death—joyful enough to her husband, who was on a pleasure trip at the time—spread mourning over the land; and a countless multitude thronged to her funeral procession. There were some riots on this occasion, caused by the determination of the people to have the hearse pass through the City; a point which they gained after some conflict with the soldiers, during which two men were killed by shots from the Horse Guards on duty. After the Lord Mayor quitted the head of the procession, outside the City, the funeral company proceeded quietly enough to Harwich, where the body was immediately embarked for Stade, on its way to Brunswick. Times had changed since she arrived at the shores whence she thus departed; arrived, “vastly happy with her future expectations,” with her Prince’s portrait in her bosom, and a place on the greatest throne in the world within her view. She had soon found her Prince “not nearly so good-looking as his picture;” and she found the same thing in regard to the “prospects” about which she had been so “vastly happy.” For her the grave could never open untimely; and we see it open, as she did, “without any regret,” though not without sadness. She had just entered her 53rd year.

1821.

QUEEN'S
FUNERAL.Annual Register,
Chron. 127.

We have finished the story of Queen Caroline at once, that we might not have to recur to it, with pain, at intervals. We must now revert to the beginning of the year, and the early transactions of the new reign.

CHAPTER III.

1820.

February, 1820.

ON occasion of the death of the sovereign, it is usual for the Parliament (which may remain in existence for six months, if the new king so please) to provide for the Civil List, and all the exigencies of Government during the coming elections, and then be dissolved. On the death of George III. there was some anxious questioning as to what should be done, on account of the peculiar condition of affairs. The time of Parliament had, thus far in the Session, been almost wholly occupied with legislating against the disaffected; and the business of the country remained to be done. It could hardly be gone through during the six months: and a six months' canvas for the elections would be a serious evil to the country. It was clearly convenient, therefore, that, as the King's Speech declared, there should be a new Parliament called without delay. But the King and Government wanted money, and supplies must be voted immediately; or, these matters of the purse would be subject to the dictation of the people at the elections. The Commons voted the supplies; the Lords acquiesced in the vote, expressly dispensing with the Act of Parliament properly necessary on such an occasion. Two other subjects were discussed; the position of the Queen, and the issue of writs to four boroughs, against which gross corruption had been proved. Lord J. Russell carried through the Commons a Bill to prevent the issue of writs to these four boroughs of Grampound, Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford. The Bill was lost, by a majority of eleven, in the Upper House; but the incident shows that the question of Parliamentary Reform was, by this time, able to command attention in the most critical seasons. On the 28th of February, the Parliament was prorogued, to be dissolved on the 13th of March; on the 21st of April the new Parliament assembled, to be sworn in; and on the 27th, the King opened the Session in person.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 23.

DISSOLUTION OF
PARLIAMENT,
March 13, 1820.

NEW PARLIAMENT
April 21.

KING'S SPEECH.

Life of Lord
Eldon, ii. 363.

His speech acquiesced in economy, and declared his contentment with the settlement of 1816, rather than that any addition should be made to the popular burdens. This sounded well, as the Lord Chancellor anticipated, in a letter written the day before, that it would; "I think now the Speech, in which he will disavow wishing for any increase, will make him popular; and, if times mend, will give him better chance of a fair increase of income than anything else could give him." This declaration, however, was obtained with difficulty, from a Prince who was always in pressing need of money. "Our royal master seems to have got into temper again," says the above letter; "he has been pretty well disposed to part with us all, because we would not make additions to his revenue."

The Ministers might well, indeed, refuse "to oppress the country, at present, by additional taxation for this purpose." The country was in no state to be trifled with; and if the King had dismissed his Ministers, he

STATE OF THE
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could hardly have found others who could have promised him an increase of income. The social disorders which had been occasioned by poverty, were in course of treatment by the harshest methods the constitution could be made to yield or countenance. The distress remained; and the agricultural complainants themselves declared that they did not seek relief at the expense of the manufacturing and commercial classes, who were as sorely tried as themselves. The jails were full of "radicals;" prosecutions for high treason, sedition, libel, and blasphemy were going forward all over the country, keeping up the disloyal and defiant action of men's minds; the Queen was hastening home to take refuge among the people, from the persecution of their rulers; men were hanged in rows, under a criminal law whose severity was now a common topic of discussion in the legislature itself; and, in this posture of affairs, the temper of the nation was not the blandest. It was good enough to let the elections pass over without violence; but not so easy as to bear any proposal for increasing the royal income; so the King had to get "into temper again," and keep his Ministers.

1820.

The Parliament returned, amidst all this turmoil and distress, differed little in its composition from the last; if anything, the Administration rather gained strength in it. In its first days, it lost one of its chief ornaments. Mr. Grattan had come up to Parliament again, on behalf of the Catholics, though his infirmities rendered him unfit for public service. He arrived in London ill; never again entered the House; and told a deputation, who waited on him in May, that they would see him no more. He was then "in the lowest state of physical exhaustion;" made a vain effort to rise; and here closed the efforts of a long and honest political life, dying on the 4th of June, after having spent forty-five years in the public service. He was missed and regretted, not only as a faithful patriot and an able man, but as the last of the band of orators bequeathed by the previous century to the present—the last of the extraordinary group, of whom Pitt and Fox were the prominent members.

DEATH OF
GRATTAN.

During this Session, when many subjects of great and growing interest were brought forward—some in regular course, and some in consequence of the distress of the times—one mighty plea was urged, which some hearers thought irrelevant to the business of the time, while wiser men saw its close connection with every form of popular misery and national difficulty. This Session was distinguished by Mr. Brougham's motion and speech on behalf of National Education. Mr. Ward might well speak of Mr. Brougham's capacity for labour, and versatility of powers. On the 24th of June, Mr. Lambton withdrew his notice of motion on Parliamentary Reform, for the 27th, on the ground that a subject so important could not be properly attended to by the House or the country at a time when the Queen's business would engross all minds. Mr. Brougham then observed that, standing in the same situation with regard to his motion on National Education, he should not withdraw it, as Parliament and the country could have nothing more important to attend to. "By the production of the plan which he was about to submit to Parliament, he trusted that he should put it in the power of the House to do a benefit to mankind, which would exist and be widely felt long after that question [the Queen's business] should have been determined; and long after

EDUCATION.

Hansard, i. 1319.

1820.

Hansard, ii. 49.

Book i. p. 77.

the differences which existed between individuals, illustrious as they were, who were more immediately connected with it, should have been forgotten." On the 28th of June was brought forward the first comprehensive and definite proposal for the Education of the People of Great Britain. As has been recorded in a previous page, an Education Committee had been sitting since 1816, by whose labours a great mass of valuable information — of moral statistics—had been collected and made available; and Mr. Brougham had, at that time, declared his intention of bringing forward a scheme of popular education for London, under parliamentary sanction and control, before attempting to diffuse instruction over the whole country. In his present move he said nothing of this former intention, but proposed a plan for the education of the entire population of "the poor in England and Wales."

The plan proposed by Mr. Brougham was never adopted; but the movement was not lost. No plan of general education of the poor has yet been adopted, and it is still impossible to see when such an event will happen; but the facts obtained and made known, the attention excited, the conviction of the necessity of education produced in a multitude of minds, which yet cannot agree to any scheme hitherto brought forward, have been, in themselves, a sort of education, in preparation for a higher and a better; and these date from Mr. Brougham's efforts in 1816 and 1820. If we have still too many marks instead of signatures, in parish registers, the proportion is much smaller than it was; if we still find old gentlemen, here and there, who exhort against the "over-instruction of the people," and ladies who refuse to take domestic servants who can read and write, we rarely meet, in towns and in ordinary middle-class society, with those alarms about the effect of the alphabet and the inkhorn upon the poor, which were common when Mr. Brougham rose to plead their cause.

According to his statement, the children requiring means of education were about one-tenth of the whole population in England; whereas those provided with any means of education at all were only one-sixteenth (according to the most recent census, it was one-seventeenth); and if the number was deducted of those who received merely a decent training in regard to habits, which was all that dame-schools and other inferior schools could afford, the amount of effectual teaching would be found to be indeed miserably small. Large districts were destitute of all means of instruction whatever: in others, the Sunday-schools of the Dissenters (who had carried out the plan of Sunday-schools much more vigorously than the Church) were the only reliance: and, good as are the principle and plan, no weekly meetings for instruction can ever impart any considerable amount of knowledge, or supply the place of that training of intellect and habits which is a main element in what is called education.

The information obtained by the Education Committee was altogether from clergymen of the Established Church; and Mr. Brougham's plan provided for the schoolmasters being all members of that Church; for their being elected on the recommendation of clergymen (together with that of resident householders); and for their qualification for the office, by taking the sacrament within a month of their appointment. These were proposals which could not be acceded to by Dissenters: and which, therefore, necessitated the rejection

of the scheme. No scheme of popular education can ever become national, in this country, which gives the management of schools and the appointment of masters to the Church, while Dissenters constitute a large proportion of the inhabitants in almost every district, and especially in the most populous, where the Dissenters bear their full share in such education, as already exists. This difficulty was immediately fatal to the measure, and has been so to every scheme proposed through succeeding years; the members of the Established Church insisting on direct religious instruction, as a part of the plan; and the Dissenters refusing either to subject their children to the religious instruction of the Church, or to pay for a system from which their children are necessarily excluded. Whenever all parties shall consent to establish a system of secular instruction, providing for the religious training to be carried on in perfect freedom by the clergy and ministers of the respective denominations, the nation may enjoy a scheme of general education; but, evidently, not till then. Mr. Brougham's measure was dropped, after the first reading of the Bill; but it answered a great purpose in rousing the mind of the nation to the most important subject which could occupy it; and it will ever remain memorable as the first express move towards the greatest achievement which still remains to be effected. This session was, the while, affording evidence of the need of popular enlightenment, and of the educational training which is afforded by the free discussion of social interests. We find petitions presented, from country districts, complaining of the operation of machinery in throwing people out of work; and, on the other hand, a large number of petitions in favour of an extension of freedom of trade.

Something was gained this year, in the direction of a diminution of capital punishment, by Sir James Mackintosh's success, in carrying three bills out of six, which he brought forward in the place of the lamented Sir S. Romilly. By the passage of these bills, shoplifting, to the value of five shillings, ceased to be punishable with death—great as was the Lord Chancellor's apprehension that, by this relaxation, small tradesmen would be ruined, in the face of the clearest evidence that the severity of the law caused that offence to go almost invariably unpunished. There is something amusing and certainly instructive, in looking back after a few years, upon the records of the fears of legislators. Lord Redesdale was, on this occasion, alarmed at the proposal that men should no longer be put to death for blackening their faces in the commission of theft by night. The offence of stealing game and other articles by night remained punishable by fine and transportation; it was proposed to repeal that portion of the Black Act by which night thefts, with blackened faces, were made punishable with death. Lord Redesdale told of the tax he and his neighbours had to pay—£200 a year, for a police of six men—to check deer-stealing on the borders of the forest; and he declared his fear that if men, already deer-stealers, were no longer to be hanged for blackening their faces, "the practice among these depredators would be universally resorted to." He was supported by the Lord Chancellor, who actually succeeded in throwing out that clause of the Bill. From this time forward, however, it was no longer a capital offence for an Egyptian to remain one year in the country; for a notorious thief to reside in Northumberland or Cumberland; for any one to be found disguised in the Mint, or to injure Westminster

1820.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Hansard, ii. 491.

1820.

Bridge. The Vagrant Laws were now to be supposed severe enough for gipsies; and the laws which protected the southern counties to be sufficient for the northern. By the third of the successful bills, which was carried with some mutilation, several offences—some serious, and some no more so than the wounding of cattle and the sending threatening letters—were reduced from capital to simple felonies. But in no case were the offences of stealing on navigable rivers, and even the lighter kinds of forgery, permitted to be visited with punishment short of death. The bills regarding these crimes were necessarily withdrawn; no further advance was made, for some sessions, in substituting milder punishments for that of death. Sir James Mackintosh continued his efforts, year by year; but could only work out some preparation for future success. In his attempt in regard to forgery in the Session of 1821, he committed a mischievous oversight in inserting the forgery of Bank of England notes among those which were to remain punishable with death, as the forgeries of wills, transfers of stock, and marriage registers and licenses. He yielded this point on the ground of the seriousness of the offence of forging Bank notes; but he thus gave up the strong ground that the capital punishment was less effective than a milder one for the prevention of the offence, and enabled his opponents to regard him as considering the severer punishment the best for its object. All that was gained for three years, was a pledge from the House of Commons in the Session of 1822, "That this House will, at an early period of the next Session of Parliament, take into their most serious consideration the means of increasing the efficacy of the criminal laws, by abating their undue rigour." This resolution was adopted by a majority of 16, in a house of 218; and the "loud cheers" which followed the announcement excited much expectation throughout the country, as to the fidelity with which the Commons would redeem their pledge on the arrival of the Session of 1823.

Hansard, i. 1338.

Hansard, vii. 805.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

The restlessness of the country under "agricultural distress" was in these days a perpetual, as commercial distress was a frequently recurring evil. It might really puzzle a visitant from another hemisphere to understand how it could be that, with regard to an article of the first necessity—an article inevitably produced, because inevitably consumed—the producers should be, for long courses of years, distressed and impoverished. "From the commencement of the Session of Parliament (1820), numerous petitions on the subject of the existing agricultural distress had been presented to the House, stating in strong language the extent of the evil, and imploring Parliament to apply a remedy." The remedy applied for was, the raising of prices by the creation of an artificial scarcity; a project which it could not be expected that the great body of bread-eaters would agree to. A Committee of Inquiry was obtained by a sort of accident—by a number of too-confident members of the House having gone home, instead of waiting till the debate closed at four in the morning: but the Government, who did not choose to open again the question of the Corn Laws, managed to limit the function of this Committee to the inquiry whether the averages were obtained correct, so as to afford reliable information as to the prices of corn abroad. In 1821, "the agricultural distress of the present year was not inferior to that of 1820. No new causes of embarrassment had sprung up, but the price of corn still conti-

Annual Register, 1820, 64.

Hansard, i. 691.

Annual Register, 1821, 66.

nued low;" landlords would not reduce their rents, and farmers had to pay their rents out of their capital. In 1822, "the beginning of the present year was marked chiefly by the clamours of the farmers and landowners." In 1823, "the country exhibited the most unequivocal marks of a steady and progressive prosperity. Every branch of manufacturing industry was in a flourishing state." Yet, though agriculture was in a somewhat less depressed condition, "complaints were uttered, in various county meetings held immediately before, or shortly after, the meeting of Parliament." These incessant groanings, wearisome to the ears, and truly distressing to the hearts, of all listeners, were not borne away idly on the winds. They did not obtain from Parliament the aid which the complainants desired, but they largely advanced the cause of Parliamentary Reform. If the agricultural interest had been in a state of high prosperity from 1820 to 1830, the great question of Reform of Parliament must have remained afloat much longer than it did, from the inertness or opposition of the agricultural classes; who, as it was, were sufficiently discontented with Parliament to desire a change. Extraordinary as this may appear, when we regard only the preponderance of the landed interest in the House at that time, we shall find, on looking abroad through the country, that it was so. Such politicians as Cobbett presented themselves among the discontented farmers, and preached to them about the pressure of the Debt, of a bad system of taxation, and a habit of extravagant expenditure; and of a short method of remedying these evils, by obtaining a better constituted House of Commons. It was no small section of the agricultural classes that assisted in carrying the question at last; and it would be interesting to know how many of that order of reformers obtained their convictions through the distress of these years.

Except by such advancement in political education as is wrought by adversity, and the discussion which it excites, the first year of the new King's reign cannot be called one of progress. No prosperity accrued to the people; and nothing was done by the Government, which could redeem them from the odium of their proceedings in regard to the Queen.—The next Session was more full of deeds and of promise, and some brightness of hope begins to dawn upon the dark scene of misrule and discontent in England. It was something that the question of Parliamentary Reform had now become so prominent as that three motions relating to it were discussed in the course of the Session; besides that great meetings were held elsewhere, which kindled sentiment and stimulated discussion. Of these meetings, the most important was a dinner at the London Tavern, on the 4th of May, when speeches of great vigour were made by the leading reformers in the House of Commons, and when Dr. Lushington openly declared, and clearly proved, that the way to every other reform was through an amended constitution of the legislature.

From this time may be dated the continuous and successful agitation of the Reform question—an agitation which was one of the blessings of peace. It appears to be as true in regard to the life of a nation as of an individual, that in order to rise, morally and intellectually, it must be possessed by some great idea, in the pursuit of which its best powers must be appealed to and perseveringly exercised. As a man will never become worthy of his manhood who

1820.

Annual Register,
1822, p. 1.Annual Register,
1823, p. 1.PARLIAMENTARY
REFORM.

1821.

lives on from day to day, merely taking what comes, and neither endeavouring to raise his conceptions of what he might be, nor to live up to such notions as he has; so neither can a nation keep up any nationality which has no aims and no ideal. The herd who live under a despot may go on being a herd from generation to generation; they are not a nation, and not having national privileges have no national duty. With those who live under a representative system, the case is widely different; they must rise morally, or they will sink politically; they cannot keep still, fold the hands to sleep, and leave the conduct of affairs to their rulers. It was the mistake of the government of Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, Eldon, and Castlereagh, not to perceive this plain truth; and their not perceiving it was the cause, not only of their misrule, but of their despondency about the state of the nation. During the war, the nation were supplied with the idea of the time—from without, as it were; so that, to their short-sighted rulers, all appeared safe and well at home. The idea, in this case, was of the national preservation first, and its honour afterwards. It is the one only quality which makes war endurable, that it supplies a national idea at the time for the people's heart and mind to work up to; and it is the great curse of war—a heavier curse than its bloodshed, burnings, and cost of woe and wealth—that it engrosses a nation with an idea lower than it might have and ought to have, unless it be a struggle for existence or redemption. The English nation had now come out of a war; and, by the very constitution of the human mind, some great general aim must be presented for it to work up to. The Government did not see the necessity, and would, ignorantly and unconsciously, have dissolved the national unity, by requiring every man to subside into his own home and proper business, without entertaining any national ideas at all, till the next war should call up the whole people again to act as one man.

In accordance with this notion of theirs, the Government set itself to repress and punish every movement of thought and speech which had any political aspiration in it. This brought out a more violent and ignorant thought, and a more desperate speech, till there were treason orations on hustings, and drillings on heaths, and diabolical murder plots in stables; and the Government regarded their charge, the nation, as sinking under an attack of moral and political plague. There was no fear, however; and the lesson offered by those times may serve to guide and cheer a future time, when a like crisis may occur, from however different causes. The necessary idea and consequent aim were sure to arise; and here, under this date, we see what they were. The nation aspired to improve its own life. Like a man who finds his indolence weakening him, his want of aim giving occasion to disorder among his passions, and his interior liberties wasting under this anarchy, and who rouses himself to contemplate the idea he once had of what he would be, and stimulates himself to overtake this ideal,—the English nation now began to rouse itself for its immortal struggle to become the representative commonwealth that it professed to be. Day by day it became clear to more minds, and more clear to all minds, that to secure the integrity of the representation was to secure all that was wanted by reasonable malcontents, and all that was necessary to silence unreasonable disaffection. From the moment that Reform of Parliament became the ascertained and avowed aim of the enlightened part of the English

nation, a new life was infused into the frame of English society. Disaffection was absorbed into a strenuous political action, and the noblest virtues of activity, self-denial, and generosity manifested themselves with growing vigour and glory, till the struggle and the sacrifice of aristocratic prejudice, privilege, and interest were completed (as regards that particular effort), by the achievement of Parliamentary Reform in 1832. It was not till that year that the work was seen to be effectual; but the effort yielded inestimable fruits from month to month of the ten preceding years. During all that time, the people were learning to apprehend the value of that representative system which had been duly appreciated hitherto only fitfully and partially, and had still to be studied as a new lesson by the whole of the generation which had been occupied by the ideas of the war. The lesson was learned, soundly and thoroughly. The lowest of the people came to know something of the idea of citizenship: the instructed became animated with more vivid and definite conceptions of political duties and liberties; and the holders of aristocratic power, privilege, and interest,—those who held much of the representation as a personal property, were strengthened and prepared for a sacrifice of political privilege and property so noble as is even yet hardly appreciated, but will not fail to be admired and honoured as it ought through the unborn generations which will read history in the clear light of a future age. While the apprehensive and narrow-minded rulers of that period were shuddering over the revelations of the time, and writing to each other that “all that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated,” that country was preparing to show how safe and how noble an abode it was for the principles of true liberty and impartial law, and how little was to be feared for a nation whose multitude desired to share in the responsibilities of legislation and order, and whose aristocracy could surrender ancient privilege and property at the summons of a new time. There had long been some among that aristocracy, enlightened and humane, who had been awake to this summons, and many among the multitude who had been impatient at its delay; but the effectual efforts which achieved the Reform of Parliament may be considered to have begun from this spring of 1821.

1821.

The avowals and incitements uttered at that dinner at the London Tavern on the 4th of May, spread through the land, being preceded by one, and followed by two more distinct movements in Parliament. That movements in Parliament were instigated and supported by the country is evident enough,—not only from the obvious truth that no order, or corporate or assembled body, ever reforms itself without pressure from without, but from the number of petitions for reform which we find sent up to the House during this and succeeding sessions. Supported by a mass of such petitions, Mr. Lambton moved, on the 17th of April, for a Committee of the whole House, to consider the state of the representation of the people in Parliament. During the debate, which occupied two evenings, the opposite benches were nearly empty; and there was so thin an attendance during both evenings as to show that the House itself was little aware of the growing importance of the question before it. The division was taken during the absence of the leading members on both sides, and even of Mr. Lambton himself, the numbers being 55 to 43; that is,

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 333.

Annual Register, 1821, p. 43.

MOTIONS FOR REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.
Hansard, v. 359.

1821.

there was a majority of 12 against Mr. Lambton's motion. Perhaps the leading members on both sides might have been surprised if they could have been told how, on that day eleven years, the country would be awaiting the issue of the struggle, in the certainty of success; and how, on that day twelve years, the Reformed Parliament would be in full career, at leisure for further improvements, from the great question of the century being disposed of.

Hansard, v. 604.

On the 9th of May, Lord John Russell took up the subject, without securing much more attention to what he had to say than Mr. Lambton had enjoyed. Few "leading members" took the trouble, or had the courage, to attend while he recommended his resolutions. These resolutions went merely to declare that the people were dissatisfied with their representation: that means should be taken to effect a representation of wealthy and populous places which had as yet no voice in the legislature: and that boroughs convicted of bribery and corruption should be disfranchised. There was little debate; the first resolution was condemned by a majority of 31 in a house of 279; and the others were negatived without a division.

Hansard, v. 624.

Unpromising as all this looked, a real beginning was made, and immediately, to amend the representation. Grampound was disfranchised, to the dismay and grief of the Lord Chancellor, who saw no bounds to the mischief of depriving some possibly innocent electors there of their votes, on account of the corruption of the rest, while he could perceive no reason for giving the franchise to Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, and other populous places. As the Bill passed the Commons, the Grampound franchise was to be transferred to Leeds: but the Lords decided for two additional members for the county of

Hansard, v. 696.

Hansard, v. 974.

York, instead of giving a representation to Leeds. There was some difficulty as to whether the Commons should put up with such a contravention of their will by the Lords; but Lord John Russell thought it important to take all that could be got on this question; and, though the Bill had ceased to be his charge after sustaining some essential alterations before it went up to the Lords, he secured its final acceptance by the Commons, and it passed on the 30th of May. It was on occasion of this Bill that Mr. Ward said that he did not conceive that by voting for the disfranchisement of Grampound, "he was giving any pledge to what was called parliamentary reform." So he thought, and so thought many who were, like him, unaware that they were now securely involved in a movement against which they had formerly protested. It is instructive to read the records (in this case very brief) of the gradual enlargement of views which time and thought bring to such men. It is an instructive comment on the past, and a valuable prophecy as to the future. In October 1819, Mr. Ward writes to the Bishop of Llandaff: "All I am afraid of is, that by having the theoretical defects of the present House of Commons perpetually dinned into their ears, the well-intentioned and well-affected part of the community should at last begin to suppose that *some* reform is necessary. Now, I can hardly conceive *any* reform that would not bring us within the draught of the whirlpool of democracy, towards which we should be attracted by an irresistible force, and in an hourly accelerating ratio. But I flatter myself there is wisdom enough in the country to preserve us long from such an innovation." In April, 1820, he writes: "But I confess that when I see the progress that reform seems to be making, not only among the vulgar,

Hansard, v. 1046.
Hansard, iv. 590.Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 226.Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 247.

but among persons like yourself, of understanding and education, clear of interested motives, and party fanaticism, my spirits fail me upon the subject. I should look forward with much more comfort to what may remain to me of life, if I could persuade myself that the first day of reform was not at hand, and that the first day of reform would not be the first day of the English Revolution." In February, 1821, he tells his correspondent that Sir J. Mackintosh "would keep the nomination boroughs;" adding, "For my part, I am well enough content with the constitution as it is. This much, however, I must confess, that if public opinion—the opinion of men of sense and reflection like yourself, unconnected with party—once turns against it, there ought to be a change. We anti-reformers stand upon *practical benefit*—now there is no talking about the *practical benefit* of a discredited constitution." In June, 1822, though still declaring himself "afraid of parliamentary reform," he speaks with satisfaction of the control exercised by public opinion over the votes of the Commons, and bears this remarkable testimony to the improvement of the national mind under the agitation of the question. Writing of Byron's prediction of a revolution, he says, "For my part, I cannot help flattering myself, in spite of a great deal of distress, and some discontent, that this event is highly improbable. It appears to me that the people of England are advancing in knowledge and good sense. Party spirit seems to be less blind and furious than it used to be. There is less factious opposition (I am not speaking of the House, but of the country) to the Ministry, and less factious support of it." People do not abandon themselves so entirely to certain leaders, but exercise a more discriminating judgment upon each question as it arises." In a few years, he became a member of the Melbourne ministry, having for his colleagues the men who had carried the Reform Bill. Here we have in brief the history of a large class of the minds of the time, which were opening sideways, as one may say, while those of the lowest order of reformers were opening upwards.

1821.

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 277.Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 320.

The other great feature of the Session was the removal of the conflict on the Catholic claims to the floor of the House of Lords. It was evident to all far-seeing men that the time was approaching when it would no longer do for politicians to go on repeating from year to year their own feelings about admitting Catholics to the legislature, and their own opinions about the pernicious character and tendencies of the Catholic faith; but when they would be compelled by circumstances to take a fresh view of the whole question, modified as it was by the admission of new elements, and bearing a new relation to the history of the time. The occasion was drawing on from year to year. When we see it arrive, we shall take a brief survey of the old view in offering the aspect of the new. Meantime, it must be recorded here that this Session of 1821 was marked by the going over of the Commons to the cause of the Catholics, and by the responsibility of their exclusion from political life being thrown upon the Lords. It was in March of this year that Mr. Warde wrote, "Well! what say you at Oxford to the progress the Roman Catholics are so evidently making towards an equal participation of all privileges? Is it borne patiently, or will a great cry be raised? Not that I think the Bill will pass *this* year; but the *intellectual* preponderance in its favour is so great in Parliament, that one can hardly conceive either that or some such measure being

CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

Lord Dudley's
Letters, 279.

1821.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 416.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 416.

CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATION.

very long delayed. The tone of opposition to it is lowered to the utmost point." It was not by "intellectual preponderance" that Mr. Plunkett's Bill was thrown out of the Lords after having been passed in the Commons by a majority of 19 on the third reading. "The Duke of York," says Lord Eldon, "has done more to quiet this matter than every thing else put together. It has had a great effect." If "every thing else" on that side delayed the resistance to the Commons less than the Duke of York, the resistance was obviously in a desperate state. If the Duke had had any thing to claim on the ground of "intellectual preponderance," he was mortal, and he was not young. So the issue was not doubtful, and probably not distant. The Catholics rejoiced with the quietness politic under their still depressed condition. The lovers of civil and religious liberty rejoiced more loudly and openly. The Lords rejoiced also. In their blindness to what was coming, they thought all was well when they had thrown out the Bill of this Session by a majority of 39. Lord Eldon writes, "I have nothing further to delay your drinking to the thirty-nine who saved the thirty-nine articles—a very fashionable toast." Their rejoicing might be allowed ungrudgingly—not only because it was short-lived, but because it was merely a veil shrouding terrors, not the less pitiable for being visionary. The spirit of fear is as much an object of compassion to the spirit of faith in politics as in any other department of life; and, till those who suffer under it can be disabused of their terrors, any snatches of relief and mirth that they can enjoy may be regarded with forbearance, and even sympathy by those, among others, whom they are oppressing for yet a little while. So the Catholics could smile at the echoes of the toast of the thirty-nine, while diligently preparing for a reurging of their claims.

This year is remarkable for an organized attack upon the freedom of the Press. It was so soon baffled, and so effectually resisted that a mere notification of the fact would serve, were it not that the promptitude and fidelity shown in the defence of liberty of printing are themselves a feature of the times which ought to be prominently brought forward.

Seasons of harsh rule are invariably those of license of speech. Men under torment or in bonds groan or curse; and a people under stringent misrule will rail; and their baser part may be expected to mock and blaspheme. Thus it was while Lord Sidmouth was in power. Libels, caricatures, irreligious scoffs, abounded; and, the more they were noticed, the more they abounded. It is observable that these libels were not the weapon of any one party. While the lowest vendors of printed trash were lampooning the rulers of the country, the Government press was libelling the leaders of the popular party; and indeed pouring out slanders against every man of liberal politics whom it could find means to attack. Evil-speaking seemed to have sprung up like a curse all over the land. Statesmen, and private gentlemen, and literary men, were fighting duels; and the prisons and police-offices were crowded with bold ruffians, or tattered ballad-venders, who dealt in railing for bread. Women were shamed in newspapers (a thing not much to be wondered at, at a time when the highest woman in the realm was pilloried in the House of Lords for a succession of weeks): the King was caricatured—the ministers were nicknamed—every public man was slandered—and the diseased appetite for mockery and vituperation seized upon sacred things; and there was nothing

so high or holy but that it was laid hold of for purposes of malice or low wit. The evil was undeniable. The only questions were how it arose, and, how it was to be dealt with. The great practical mistake was in the conclusion that it arose, unprovoked, from the natural wickedness of men, and that it must be put down by the strong hand—this strong hand being by no means impartial in its pressure. Forty peers and bishops, a large number of the clergy of the Established Church, and of Tory leaders, in and out of Parliament, formed themselves into a company which they called the Constitutional Association, but which was soon better known through the country by the name of the Bridge Street Gang. They invited subscriptions and co-operation from all who were well-disposed towards piety, peace, and order; and their appeal to the religious world, and on behalf of morals, taste, and quietude, was extensively responded to. It took some time to show well-meaning and apprehensive people the tyranny and vice of a system of party superintendence of the Press. But this tyranny and the vicious principle of the Society were apparent soon enough to secure the speedy insignificance and decay of the enterprise. Englishmen soon began to see that the forty peers and bishops who undertook the control of the press could be no proper members of a Court of final Appeal. As censors of the press, they could not properly sit as judges in the House of Lords. Englishmen soon began to inquire what was to become of their liberties if a rich association of great men was to spread its police of spies and informers over the land, and prosecute every poor tradesman who might offer to sell what they considered blasphemous and seditious works. It was evident that by a mere threat of prosecution they might deter any tradesman but a stout-hearted one here and there from selling any book or paper which they did not approve. Englishmen soon began to cry “Shame!” when they saw members of this Association taking their places in the jury box in trials for libel; and the fate of the enterprise was sealed when the judges adopted the practice of compelling jurymen to declare upon oath whether they were members of the Constitutional Association, before permitting them to enter upon their functions. The society had sent a circular to every justice of the peace throughout the country, offering their exposition and application of the law of libel, and requiring that it should be universally made known, as its diffusion would be considered in aggravation of punishment in convictions for libel henceforward: they had raised a vast fund, instituted many prosecutions,—thrown gray-haired men, starving women, and ill-conditioned adventurers into prison, to grow desperate there, and do double mischief when they came out again: they had usurped the office of the Attorney General, interfered with the administration of justice, and laid hands on the press, and were about to raise up, by provocation, a counter Association, in conflict with which the peace, temper, and manners of society would probably have given way altogether; when, at this point, the ravage was stopped. Exposure was all that was necessary; and the exposure was easily and speedily made. The Association was formed in December 1820. On the 23rd of the next May, Mr. Brougham directed the attention of the House of Commons to its proceedings: and after a discussion of its legality and morality, a few nights afterwards, its vigour decayed: and before another year was over, we find it spoken of in the records of the time as a thing gone by,—a mischief and danger prac-

1821.

Edinburgh Review, xxxvii. 120.

Hansard, v. 1487.

Edinburgh Review, xxxvii. 121.

Hansard, v. 1491.

Annual Register, 1821. p. 60.

1821.

tically extinguished, though the Association was not disbanded. When we consider what the resources of this society were, in funds, numbers, rank, influence, and the support of good principle and feeling—however misled and misapplied—we cannot but be struck with the strength and liveliness of the English instinct for liberty, and grateful for the security afforded by its vigilance.

KING'S VISIT TO
IRELAND.
Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 416.

So late as the end of April of this year, Lord Eldon writes to his brother, "No Irish expedition: probably no coronation." Yet the King was crowned, and went to Ireland, and also, later in the year, to Hanover. When he went to Ireland, his Ministers were happy in the hope that the visit of the Sovereign would "tranquillize" that unfortunate country: and the accounts sent home by Lord Sidmouth, who attended the King, of his reception, show no misgiving as to the duration of the "good feeling" with which his Majesty was greeted. Nothing was visible but "enthusiastic loyalty," inducing hopes of "permanent benefit," and this, as late as September. Yet, on the 20th of October, Lord Sidmouth reports to Lord Londonderry (Lord Castlereagh, under his new title,) "very unpleasant accounts from Ireland." Unreasonable as it would be at any time to expect to satisfy a malcontent nation by a passing visit from the sovereign, there seem to have been special reasons in this case why the royal appearance acted only for the moment, and on the surface—and a limited surface. While the royal squadron was wind-bound off Holyhead, news arrived of the death of the Queen. The King proceeded to Dublin, and secluded himself till the corpse of his wife was supposed to have left England. He then emerged,—in a mood which we can imagine to be shared by the crowd around him, under the stimulus of Dublin festivities, but which can hardly be supposed to have so impressed the Irish nation with reverence and love as to work in them a sudden restoration to peace, contentment, and loyalty. "I cannot help suspecting," writes Mr. Ward, "that his Majesty's late journeys to see his kingdoms of Ireland and Hanover will not, on the whole, redound much to his honour or advantage. His manners no doubt are, when he pleases, very graceful and captivating. . . . But on the whole he wants dignity, not only in the seclusion and familiarity of his more private life, but on public occasions. . . . He seems to have behaved not like a sovereign coming in pomp and state to visit a part of his dominions, but like a popular candidate come down upon an electioneering trip. If, the day before he left Ireland, he had stood for Dublin, he would, I dare say, have turned out Shaw or Grattan."

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 355.

Lord Dudley's
Letters, 295.

CORONATION.

At the Coronation, which took place on the 19th of July, George IV., for the time, looked the king. There was hollowness there too. The blaze of jewels, the splendour of the robes, the pealing of the music, the cry of "God save the King," the smiles and loyal eagerness, all looked like rejoicing: but the King's Chancellor, the keeper of his conscience and slave of his prerogative, admits, "Every body went in the morning under very uncomfortable feelings and dread." The reason why was known to all. There was one outside knocking for admission, "trying every door in the Abbey in vain." This phantom of an injured Queen was felt, though not seen, amidst the festivities; and how dreaded it was, we perceive from the triumph of the pious Lord Eldon in her mortification. "It is all

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. p. 428.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 427.

over, quite safe and well. A gentleman in the Hall told us, that when her Majesty got into the carriage again, she wept. John Bull spared us; indeed his family were very civil to me in the course of my transit from the Hall to the Abbey. The business is certainly over in a way nobody could have hoped."

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Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 427.

Another "business" was "certainly over" just at this time, which must have caused relief to the King and his Ministers, even greater than that the coronation passed off well. It may be hoped that they also felt something of the solemn and mournful emotion which ran through the heart of the civilized world at the news. While the pageantry of our great regal festival was preparing—while the gems were burnishing, and the tapestries unrolling, and the throne erecting, and the choir practising, the Chamber of Deputies at Paris were receiving the following petition:

DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

"Napoleon is no more. We claim his remains. The honour of France requires this restitution; and what the honour of France requires will be accomplished. She cannot endure that he who was her chief—that he whom she saluted with the title of Great, and the designation of Emperor, should remain as a trophy in the hands of foreigners; and that every Englishman may say, on showing an insolent monument, 'Here is the Emperor of the French.'"

Annual Register, 1821, Chron. 111.

The temper of this petition may be excused when it is considered that it is from the officers and adherents of Napoleon, who saw him pine and die far from home, and in captivity. At such a moment they had the sympathy even of those who had most urgently demanded that the world should be secured by the rigid seclusion of him who had troubled it so long and so severely. Now that it was over, and that that restless spirit could trouble his race no more, the natural feelings of compassion and regret arose strongly and universally. His fellow-men began at once to look back upon him as a man, and not only as a conqueror and disturber who had humbled the pride of nations, and broken up the peace of continents. He was at once regarded as a suffering man—all pitying him for the dreadful fate of his closing years, spent in chafing against his bonds, and sinking under the burden of ignominious idleness; while the most thoughtful had a still deeper compassion for him, as one who had failed in the true objects of human life by the pursuit of personal aims. Looking back, they saw how one endowed with noble powers could have known but little of the peace of the soul; and how, in the crowning moments of his triumphs, his life had been a failure. Looking forward, they saw how, throughout the whole future of human experience, he would stand dishonourably distinguished from the humblest servant of the race who had ministered to its real good. Many, throughout all time, who have apparently been baffled in their aims, and laboured in vain to work out their schemes, have, visibly or invisibly, attained the truest and highest success by an unwavering fidelity to the right and the true, and have enjoyed their natural recompense in the exaltation of their own being. This one man, before whose powers the nations quailed, and whose will seemed to be, for the time, the law of his kind, was, in his very triumphs, a sufferer—a wanderer from the home of human affections—a powerless and defeated soldier in the conflict of human life. And he could not retrieve himself in adversity. Leisure and solitude

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brought no healing to him. He had no moral force which could respond to the appeal of adverse circumstance. He had in him nothing of the man which could, in a season of rest, look back with wonder or a smile on the turbulence of its childish vanity and pride; nothing of the sage which could draw from the vicissitudes of experience any aliment of present wisdom and peace. He remained to the last morally a child and a sufferer—a baffled child, and an unconscious sufferer from worse woes than his mortifications, his bondage, and his privations. It might be a question whether all was done for him, or done in the best way, which his vast powers, and his misfortunes, and his appeal as an enemy, might claim; but if all had been done which the highest wisdom and magnanimity could suggest, it could have really availed him nothing. His misery lay too deep for healing by human hands: it was wrought into his very being; and it could be dissolved by no touch short of that which took out the life from the clay, and gave back the dust to dust. That time had now come. The dulled eye no longer wandered over the boundless ocean which surrounded his island prison; his aching mind no longer gazed abroad listlessly over the heaving sea of human affairs; his spent heart had ceased its beating; and his dust lay under the willow, in that nook at St. Helena, where strangers came from the east and the west, to feel and wonder at the silence which had settled down on one who had made the world echo with the wail of the widow and the orphan, the groans of dying multitudes, the tramp of hosts, and the crash of falling empires. In this nook of the world, there had been no peace to his soul; and it was, perhaps, all the more soothing to find quietness about his grave.

Annual Register,
1821, Chron. 104.

He died on the 5th of May, 1821, after a painful and lingering decline. The news of his death reached England while London was preparing for the Coronation of the Sovereign who had had him in charge, and who was to follow him, after the lapse of a few years, to that bed of rest where foes lie down side by side—comrades at last.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD Liverpool's administration had been very powerful in its day; and it still preserved an air of authority and security which imposed upon the general public, and prevented all but the watchful lovers of liberty on the one hand, and those who dreaded change on the other, from perceiving that a new time was coming,—a way opening for the arrival of new men and new measures.

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The Ministry were not strong with the King. We have seen how nearly they were going out immediately after his accession. Again, when the King went to Hanover, there existed "an uncomfortable state of feeling between himself and his Prime Minister," which was afterwards accommodated; but not for long. In December, he was anxious and ill-humoured about a new creation of baronets, on which Lord Sidmouth observes, in a note to the Premier, "and really the matter is not worth a gale of wind, much less a storm." However trifling the subject of these royal discontents, their frequency was by this time affecting the strength of the Ministry.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 371.

The Administration was not strong in itself. Lord Sidmouth had long been wishing to retire; and there was perpetual apprehension of the Lord Chancellor being compelled to do so. Lord Londonderry showed at times symptoms of fatigue and nervousness which made his colleagues uneasy, and caused the King to advise rest and change of scene: and the anxieties and toils of office were wearing down the frame of the Premier himself.

The Administration was not strong with the country, though its weakness was not perceived by everybody. The distress of the agriculturists was pressing; and the return to cash payments had so lowered prices, and for the time destroyed the ordinary relation between money and other commodities, that the embarrassment created extreme discontent. While the ignorant and impatient of both the moneyed and the landed classes threatened each other with confiscation of the Funds or of estates, both united in claims for relief from the Government which no government could grant. The Ministry preserved their attitude of grave sufficiency; but they looked about for aid and support.

Above all, the Administration was not strong in regard to the times. It spent a good deal of leisure and energy in bemoaning the changes in the spirit of the times; but it could not prevent them, and it could not cope with them. It would fain have strengthened continually the policy of the Holy Alliance abroad: it would have kept a good old Protestant Tory, with underlings like himself, in power in Ireland: it would have gone on imposing the same taxes, and following the same routine in England for another term of years: but it could do none of these things. Amelioration drew on, in spite of their fears and endeavours. England was about to will a more liberal

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COALITION WITH
THE GRENVILLE
PARTY.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 446.

continental policy. Ireland was about to have rulers well disposed towards the Catholics. A remission of taxation was becoming necessary, and the principles of commerce were brought more and more into question every year. Something must be done. What should it be?

To keep the Whigs not only out of office, but out of all thoughts of office, was the first thing necessary. The Whigs were not trained for office, and were supposed to be so incompetent to its business that it would be the greatest of misfortunes to the country if their brilliancy and moral force in Parliament should carry them into work for which they were unfit. They were supposed to be aware of this unfitness, and to rely for its reparation on the Grenville party, in alliance with whose practical ability they could undertake to govern the country. The thing to be done therefore was to separate the Grenvilles from all sympathy with the Whigs. It was a sore necessity,—that of proposing a coalition with the Grenvilles: but it was done. The Lord Chancellor mourned over it. “This coalition, I think, will have consequences very different from those expected by the members of the administration who brought it about. I hate coalitions.” The inconveniences were indeed great. The Grenville party of course agreed in the main in the political principles of the Liverpool cabinet, or the coalition could not have taken place: but they were friendly to the Catholic claims,—differing in this important matter from every member of the Cabinet except Lord Londonderry: and on the whole, there was an inclination towards liberalism in them which was disturbing to official men who had so long thought alike, and had all their own way. Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had to reconcile themselves to the changes which they had found themselves compelled to make by the consideration that they had materially damaged the Opposition. It was not only the Opposition that was damaged by the change. The supporters of Government were made as angry as the Opposition leaders were made ironical, by the sight of the lavish gifts made to the new allies on their own demand. The Whig Lords wrote and said, that “everything had fallen in price except the Grenvilles:” and the adherents of the Ministry did not conceal their opinion that the good things given to the Grenvilles would have been more righteously and usefully bestowed upon themselves. The accession was not great, either as to numbers or ability. Lord Grenville had retired from public life, and would not be tempted out of his retreat. The Marquis of Buckingham was made a duke; one of the Wynns went to the head of the Board of Control; and another was sent as Envoy to the Swiss Cantons, with appointments of the value of about £4,000 a year. In return, they brought a few votes to the Government; lessened their own dignity and estimation in the eyes of men, and removed to a greater distance the prospect of the accession of the Whigs to power. One other function they unconsciously fulfilled—that of a signal to the nation that a change was occurring in the spirit of government which must bring on a new and better time.

RETIREMENT OF
LORD SIDMOUTH.

A more important circumstance than that of the coming over of any number of Grenville officials and voters was that Mr. Peel at this juncture took the office from which Lord Sidmouth retired. There was little noise made about this at the time. The friends and admirers of Lord Sidmouth once more congratulated him on the number of plots which he had detected, and the energy

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with which he had frustrated them; and all agreed that there was so substantial an accordance between the views, principles, and aims of himself and Mr. Peel, that the country would not feel the change of men. Such was really the belief and sentiment a quarter of a century ago: but how strange does it appear now! It seems scarcely possible that these men should have been regarded as, except in point of years, alike,—alike to the destinies of the country; while now the elder is regarded as a conscientious and complacent bigot,—a man of one idea,—and that idea one which must unfit him for wise administration: while the other, then in the first full vigour of intellectual life, was preparing for an administration of affairs which should be signalized by perpetual extension, and boundless fertility of resource. Lord Sidmouth watched for sedition from day to day, and dreamed of plots in all seasons of repose. His duty was, in his own eyes, to discover and quell sedition, which he called preserving the monarchy: his triumph was to frustrate conspiracy, and hang the conspirators. His hope was to root up sedition, and leave the field of politics clear; and his solace in retirement was to be that he had caught the wicked in their own snares, and in so far protected the good. “The truth is,” he observes, “that it was *because* my official bed was become comparatively a bed of roses that I determined to withdraw from it. When strewn with thorns, I would not have left it.” While no plot was hatching, there was nothing for him to do; and he took the opportunity of introducing his successor, to be in readiness for frustrating the next conspiracy. But that successor, considered at the time so wonderfully like him except in years, has not been engaged ever since about plots and sedition. He has looked deep into the causes of sedition, and seen how much better it is to obviate discontent than to punish it. He has looked forwards, so as to see that there is a law of progress as imperative in politics as in other human affairs; and he has learned to satisfy aspiration betimes, instead of attempting to crush it. He has looked abroad, far and wide, over the expanse of human interests, and has allowed his sense of responsibility to expand in proportion to that observation, till he has risen to the head of statesmanship, as statesmanship is in our age. He has been the watchman and steersman of an empire,—almost of a world,—while Lord Sidmouth was but its rat-catcher. A sober, industrious, vigilant rat-catcher was he, whose heart was truly in his duty: but he could not rise above that function; and it is striking to read now, in the registers of the time, concerning these two men, “that the substitution of the one for the other could have no effect in the course of administration.” It is striking too to mark how lesser men speak of greater,—the lesser men being unable to see beyond the circle filled by themselves. Lord Sidmouth writes approvingly of the demeanour of his successor, declaring that “nothing could have been more becoming and creditable:” language which is called by his biographer “an almost prophetic anticipation” of Mr. Peel’s “future eminence.” No: Lord Sidmouth was disturbed by no such stirrings of prophecy, or he would have remained on his “bed of roses,” and have died on it sooner than recognise as a successor such a redeemer of malcontents as Mr. Peel has since become.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 390.

MR. PEEL.

Annual Register, 1822, p. 6.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 391.

It was at present impossible for Mr. Canning to be invited into the administration. Men were not agreed as to the ground of the evident impossibility: but the general belief was that it was on account of his refusal to act against

MR. CANNING.

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the Queen. He had been an early and influential adviser of the Princess: he would not join in any of the proceedings of her adversaries, and offered to resign, but was not permitted; so he went abroad. When, on his return from the foreign travel with which he had occupied the time of the prosecution, he found the discussion of her affairs unavoidably mixed up with that of all the doings of the administration, he peremptorily resigned his place at the Board of Control. By this step he was supposed to have incurred the royal displeasure; and he was not now one of the new members of the Government. But his time was coming, and the nation did not long inquire for him in vain. Meanwhile there occurred in regard to him one of those striking instances of which history is full, of how, while "Man proposes, God disposes." The India Company were not inclined to dispense with such a man, if the Government could do without him. They offered him the post of Governor General of India; and soon after Parliament met in 1822, it was announced that Mr. Canning was to succeed Lord Hastings in that office. During the spring and summer, Mr. Canning continued his preparations for India; and the nation found time, amidst its pressure of business and of distress, to watch them with regret. Many of the multitude feared and disliked the aristocratic tendencies of the man, and the political bias of the statesman: the members of the Administration disliked and cavilled at him; and there was much jealousy of him in the House of Commons: but still the eyes of the nation were upon him: and he was generally regarded as the foremost man in public life; and there was a prevalent feeling of sorrow and shame that he was allowed to go so far away. Still, his preparations went on: Mr. Ward wrote, "It will be a singular and unsatisfactory termination to the career of the greatest orator in either house of parliament; of a man too whose talents have always been directed towards the support of a system of policy which has succeeded beyond the most sanguine hopes of its promoters."—Lord Londonderry was watching the outbreaks and repressions of rebellion in Italy, under the despotism of the Holy Alliance,—not unconscious perhaps of the deep curses with which his name was proscribed through all the Secret Societies, and most of the homes of the Continent: Ireland was on her trial again under the wise and mild administration of Lord Wellesley, who this spring succeeded Lord Talbot as viceroy:—"Vansittart's crest was elevated" on account of an improved report of the revenue; and Lord Sidmouth was hoping that "perilous and merciless retrenchments" would be no more heard of: and this hope was so far disappointed as that £3,000,000 of taxes were taken off: the agricultural interest obtained a loan of a million, to support them till the first difficulties of a return to cash payments were over: all these interests were in full career for the months of that spring and summer; yet Canning was never lost sight of for a moment. When his preparations were made, and the hour of sailing drew nigh, he went to Liverpool, to take his farewell of his constituents; and there we see him "at Seaforth House, the residence of his friend Mr. Gladstone (the father of the Right Hon. W. Gladstone), situated on a flat, stretching north of the town, and overlooking the sea. The room which he occupied looked out upon the ocean, and here he would sit for hours, gazing on the open expanse, while young Gladstone, who has subsequently obtained such distinction in the councils of his sovereign, used to be playing

Lord Dudley's
Letters, p. 301.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 372.

on the strand below." On this occasion, as he sat "for hours," he was revolving in his mind news which had reached him on his journey down, and which would penetrate, and fill with his name, every corner of Europe, as fast as the winds could carry the tidings.

1822.

Life of Canning,
by Robert Bell,
321.

Of all the interests presenting themselves at this important season, none was more engrossing at the time than the state of Ireland. Alas! when was it otherwise? and when will it be otherwise? There is some satisfaction however in contemplating this period, because in this direction, as in others, some promise of a better government, and more social welfare, was dawning. It must always be long, and seem yet longer, before the good results of an improved policy can appear in a reliable form in a society so disorganized as that of Ireland: but the institution of the improvement is meanwhile a cheering spectacle in itself. Lord Talbot was a Viceroy whose mind was full of ideas of Protestant Ascendancy: and it was little that his humane and sensible secretary, Charles Grant, could do to ameliorate his rule: and at that time, the bigot Saurin, the unrelenting foe of the Catholics, was Attorney General for Ireland. Now, the Viceroy and the Attorney General, Mr. Plunket, were in favour of the Catholic claims: and though the usual method was still pursued of appointing men of mutually counteracting tendencies, Mr. Goulburn being sent as secretary with the Marquis of Wellesley, the gain to the liberal cause was, on the whole, very great.

LORD WELLESLEY
IN IRELAND.

The effect of the King's visit was over, almost as soon as he was out of sight: and then the heart-burnings among fellow-citizens in the towns, and outrages in the country, went on as virulently as before. The Conciliation Dinner which was to celebrate the King's visit was given up, and the Committee publicly resigned their trust, on the ground of the dissensions of the parties who were to conciliate. The Catholics offered addresses of affectionate congratulation to the in-coming Viceroy: while the Corporation of Dublin offered an address of affectionate condolence to the out-going Attorney General. An attempt to introduce Catholics into corporations was defeated at a guild of Dublin merchants: and the majority made ostentatious rejoicings under the eyes of their new ruler. In the country, no man's house was secure; and those of the gentry were so many garrisons. Bands of Whiteboys—hundreds in a band—besieged these garrisons, fought, plundered, murdered, in defiance of police and soldiery. The soldiers indeed found themselves powerless against a foe so light-footed, so familiar with the country, and so utterly reckless and desperate as the peasantry of the south of Ireland. In the north, as usual, all was comparatively quiet: but at length symptoms of disorder appeared there also. It became necessary to empower the Viceroy to proclaim any part of the country which might be disturbed,—and in February two bills were passed; one to reimpose the Insurrection Act, and the other to suspend the Habeas Corpus, till the ensuing 1st of August. In the course of the month of April, after a dreadful season of disorder and its punishments, comparative quiet seemed to settle down on that unhappy country: but to rebellion and its retribution now succeeded famine. As in later times, excessive rains rotted the potatoes in the ground; as in later times, the people were taken unprepared. They ate their potatoes till no more were to be had: and then they took to oatmeal, till they had no means of purchase left; and then

Annual Register,
1822, p. 8.

Hansard. vi. 220.

Annual Register,
1822, p. 85.

1822.

they crowded the roads and towns to beg, or stole away into hiding-places, to die of hunger. As in later times, no seed potatoes were left, to give some hope of a harvest the next year: and again, as so often before, did typhus fever follow upon the famine, quelling rebellion itself in destitution and woe. The next year's crop of potatoes, however, was good: there was a decline of insurrectionary movement: and the influence of the liberal Viceroy did perhaps all that it could under the circumstances. But the opinions and temper of the Viceroy can effect but little in such a case while the laws and the conduct of surrounding officials proceed on principles that he does not hold. That the Marquis of Wellesley was favourable to the claims of the Catholics was gratifying to them: but it did not enable him to do them or their country much good while the laws, and almost every one concerned in the administration of them were anti-catholic. The true field of Irish amelioration was the floor of parliament, where oppressive and insulting laws could be remodelled or repealed. To this end Mr. Canning directed what he believed would be his last efforts for his country before going to the distant dependency where he was henceforth to live and work. On the 30th of April of, as he supposed, his last session in Parliament, he moved for leave to bring in a Bill to annul the disabilities of Catholic Peers to sit in the House of Lords. He professed to have hope that a measure so limited as this might be obtained: and he saw how its adoption must open a way to further concessions. The Bill was carried successfully on its way, as far as to the second reading in the House of Lords, when it was thrown out by a majority of 42.

MR. CANNING'S
MOTION ON CA-
THOLIC PEERS.

Hansard, vii. 211.

Annual Register,
1822, p. 42.
Annual Register,
1822, p. 53.
Annual Register,
1822, p. 53.

Annual Register,
1822, p. 54.

Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 386.

Till the enlarged liberality of the laws should enable him to do more, Lord Wellesley did, from his own resources of wisdom and humanity, what he could. He greatly improved the police of Ireland: he completed the revision and amendment of the list of magistrates: he suppressed the offensive demonstrations of the Orange party, forbidding the procession of the 5th of November, and the decking out of the statue on College Green: and he received with magnanimous good-humour the evidences of unpopularity which he thus brought upon himself. The Dublin Corporation censured him, under cover of a censure of the Lord Mayor, who had co-operated zealously with him. The "Protestant" newspapers abused him. The "Protestant" public mobbed him at the theatre; some fraction of that loyal public throwing a bottle at him, on one such occasion. The turbulent people under him might behave as they would; it did not deter him from attempting to do them good. The secret of success in that endeavour has not yet been found: but there can be no doubt that the administration of Lord Wellesley was a benefit to Ireland in many ways. Never before perhaps were the affairs of Ireland so copiously discussed in the legislature as in this season, when her saddest disorder and misery called forth only the more of the paternal element in the mind and heart of her excellent ruler. Sir John Malcolm wrote of him, a year later than this time, that he "was glad to find the extreme Catholics as much out of humour with the Lord Lieutenant as the extreme Orangemen;" and that "that strange scene, Ireland, appeared to be just at that crisis when all his highest qualities, if allowed their scope," must do "essential good." If we see, as yet, but too little of this "essential good," we must remember that Ireland has improved, since the times prior to Lord Wellesley's

rule; improved in resources, and even (bad as matters yet are) in principle and temper: and there is no saying how much worse she might have been now but for him,—how her Orangemen might have raved and her factions have fought and jobbed, as before his day. But there is so little to be said yet of hope and gratulation about Ireland, that it is a welcome change to turn to any other scene,—even of strife.

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A strife took place in the Church at this time which requires notice from its connection with both past and future states of religion in England. Throughout its whole existence, the Church of England has included three parties of religionists; men who naturally class themselves under one of three methods of regarding and receiving the religion which is equally precious to them all. These sections are the High Church, the Calvinistic, and the Moderate: or, as we call them at the present day, the Catholic, the Evangelical, and the Liberal. By the constitution and principle of the Roman Catholic Church, men of all tendencies of mind are retained in harmony within its pale. Under the authority of that Church, every diversity of mind, manners, and morals may repose, without further strife than must arise wherever the inquisitive and active mind of man has scope and interest. But a similar repose and harmony are not possible in a Protestant Church, whose appeal is to the Scriptures themselves, or, in other words, to some other interpretation of the Bible than that of an infallible authority. In the framing of the Thirty-nine Articles, openings were left for the liberty of scrupulous minds and strict intellects: and by the spirit of the Church itself, it has always been understood that the various human mind was to be liberally and gently dealt with, in regard to difficult matters of doctrine. The mischief to be apprehended is, that bigots who have the power will think it right to close such openings, which they consider openings to error: and the hope in such cases is, that the instinct and principle of liberty which wrought the Reformation will ever watch over the rights and privileges it was intended to secure.

PETERBOROUGH
QUESTIONS.

Every one knows how much it cost Wesley to leave the Church: and all can understand how men who followed soon upon his time might not only share his reluctance in that particular, but take warning against dissent, from the spectacle of the Methodist hierarchy, established with great and threatening power outside the limits of the Church. Some individuals of strong Calvinistic tendencies had applied themselves for a considerable period before our present date to rouse the Church from its indolence and carelessness; from what has been called its "avoidance of all collision with controverted points, its study of ease and repose, its dealings in truisms and generalities, and subsidence into a calm ethical view of Christianity. This rousing, it was naturally thought, would be best effected by the placing in the pulpits of the Church the greatest possible number of earnest men of sentiments called, in the language of the time, Evangelical. Mr. Wilberforce and his friends did much in furtherance of this object; and their efforts no doubt caused a great revival of life in the Church, and of personal religion in the higher classes of society. But, as was sure to happen, they roused something else besides religious earnestness. They awoke the old High Church spirit of domination and exclusiveness, which wrought at first in single instances, and gradually enlarged its scope, till the attention of the whole of society was

A Retrospect of
the Religious Life
of England, p. 122.

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fixed on that movement, called Tractarian, which we shall have occasion to survey at a future time. The first striking instance of the awakening of the old High Church spirit of domination over faith occurred at this time, and made no little noise.

Hansard, v. 1166.

On the 14th of June, 1821, a petition was presented to the House of Lords by Lord King, from the Rev. Henry W. Neville, rector of Blatherwick. The story was this; and it was presented to Parliament only because the petitioner had no other appeal. This rector was under obligation to present a curate to a living in the diocese of Peterborough: and he did accordingly present the Rev. John Green,—a man of unquestionable character and ability, who had signed the thirty-nine articles, and was ready to sign them again. The Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Herbert Marsh) sent to him a printed paper, containing eighty-seven questions drawn up by himself, requiring answers to these—such answers as should be satisfactory to the bishop—as a condition of the curate being licensed. Mr. Green declined this new test; and the bishop refused his license. An appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury being unsuccessful, the petitioner had no choice but to apply to the House of Lords for a judgment as to whether every bishop might frame new tests as a condition of entrance upon the offices of the church. The matter was gone into at greater

Hansard, vii. 821.

length the next year, when another petitioner, the Rev. Mr. Grimshawe, on behalf of the Rev. Mr. Thurtell, complained that the bishop would not even permit to the respondent any choice as to the mode, even in regard to length, in which he should reply to the questions. The questions were in a brief, even an abbreviated, form: printed so as to leave only a certain blank space within which the answers must be comprehended. Mr. Thurtell answered the questions, appending, on separate sheets, his statements of his opinions, and the reasons and authorities for them. But the bishop wanted “short, plain, and positive answers,” that he might “know whether the opinions of the persons examined accorded with those of the Church.” The points proposed were some of the most difficult and intricate to be found in the whole compass of theological science: and the wisest persons saw the most immediately and clearly that these were matters which could not be pronounced upon, except without any of the due reservations, in the compass of a few inches of paper. The bishop pleaded his legal right to examine his clergy in any manner he chose: and if this legal right could not be denied, the inference was that some further security for liberty of opinion was needed than at present existed. He asserted that his method was not an innovation,—that it was not even unusual: but the indignation and sorrow that it roused seem to show that society was surprised at his proceedings, and quite indisposed to acquiesce in them. He pleaded also that there was nothing in his questions which was not in plain and direct accordance with the articles of the Church—the clear answer to which was, that his fellow-clergy might think otherwise: and that if they did not, his questions were purely needless. On both occasions the House of Lords refused to entertain the subject: but it was long before the country let it drop. On neither occasion was a word uttered by any bishop but the one appealed against. Lord Carnarvon expressed his astonishment at their silence, and did not conceal his contempt of it. He declared that these Spiritual Peers, whose ample presence that night was certainly ornamental, though not

Hansard, vii. 846.

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apparently useful, were ready enough to give their opinion on constitutional questions, but had not a word to say on a matter so peculiarly within their province. The truth was, they were unprepared. The great subject of liberty of opinion was coming up again before they were trained and habituated to its discussion, or even to its consideration. If, as is probable, they all believed that their episcopal brother had a legal right to do as he had done, but had yet been morally guilty of oppression, and therefore, functionally, of imprudence and mischief-making, they had better have said so. They gained nothing by their silence; for the country said it for them, through the press, the pulpit, and all private conversation. Something was gained to the cause of liberty of opinion, in and out of the Church; and much was done towards that clear marking out of the three great religious parties which have since been as prominently distinguished (allowing for the softened spirit of the times) as in the days when Laud pilloried the Puritans, and "the ever-memorable Mr. John Hales" was "bidding Calvin good night."

A new Marriage Act passed this session, which was of considerable importance as the first great step towards a return to that freedom of marriage which was absolutely unlimited prior to the legislation of 1753. The evils arising from nullity of marriages had long been found to be so great that the Commons had, within five years preceding this time, passed three bills granting some relaxation. These bills had been thrown out by the Lords, who now, however, so amended the bill of the Lower House as to give it a far wider scope than had been proposed there. The bill, when it reached the Lords, provided that marriages which were null in law should become legal, if left thus far unquestioned by any competent tribunal: and that illegal marriages of minors should henceforth be not void, but only voidable: and voidable only within the minority of the parties, and under certain conditions. The Lords improved upon this so far as to decree that no solemnized marriage whatever could be annulled. The Lord Chancellor, his brother, and some other old-fashioned peers, were excessively scandalized at the favour with which this bill was received in their House: but they obtained little pity for their concern: for that concern was about those parts of the measure which related to property pledged under the former law to parties who profited by the irregular marriage of their connections. Such property would now go to the married parties, whose marriage would be legalized by the new bill. The Lord Chancellor was full of fears, as usual; fears that the House which had hitherto possessed the good opinion of the country would lose it, and be, before ten days were over, utterly despised as guilty of legal robbery. But the House knew what it was about, and what the nation would think. It supported the bill by a majority of more than two to one: and it was aware that "the country" did not, like the Lord Chancellor, think that a few partial claims of property, accruing by accident, and by such an accident as an illegal marriage, were to be preferred to the everlasting and illimitable claims of a fundamental morality. It was undoubtedly a hardship that certain parties who had been led by a reliance on the statute to reckon on property forfeited by the irregular marriage of others, should be disappointed of their expectations: but the blame of this disappointment lay with a preceding generation of statesmen, who had been too blind to see the mischief they were doing in tampering with the freedom

NEW MARRIAGE
ACT.
Hansard, vii. 1455.

Annual Register,
1822, p. 88.

Hansard, vii. 1455.

1822.

of marriage: and not with those who were now endeavouring to restore the sanctity and stability of an institution in which the morality of society was still involved. Imprudence and carelessness in contracting marriage are a great evil: but it is less than that of playing fast and loose with an institution whose very virtue resides in its certainty and irreversibleness. Whether a time may come when society may perceive that its moral purity can be better promoted than by connecting the conjugal relation with law and arrangements of property, is a question fairly open to the speculative moralist,—a proper subject of individual opinion: but it was not the question now. There was no question of the institution itself, but of legal arrangements under it: and the Lords and “the country” were united in considering the inviolability of marriage the first consideration in morality, and the fate of certain windfalls of property a very inferior one. So the country did not throw off its “good opinion” of the Upper House “within ten days,” as the Lord Chancellor prophesied, but certainly thought no worse of the Lords for the large majority with which they passed the new Marriage Act of 1822.

CLOSE OF SESSION,
Annual Register,
1822, p. 179.

KING'S VISIT TO
SCOTLAND.

Cabinet History
of England, xxv.
p. 73.

DEATH OF LORD
LONDONDERRY.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 464.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 463.

When the Session closed, on the 6th of August, the King and the Legislature dispersed, to take their rest and pleasure in various ways. On the 10th, the King set off down the Thames, in great pomp, on his way to Scotland. Lord Londonderry hastened to his seat at Foot's Cray, to prepare for his mission to the Congress of Verona in October, where he was to represent England. His passage thither was sure to be attended by the curses of all the lovers of freedom along the road, and by the groans of all the Secret Societies over which he was to ride rough-shod, to be welcomed at the end of his journey by the sympathies of all the despots in Europe. He probably knew this. He knew that the continent was honeycombed with these Secret Societies; and confident as he was of his motives—imperturbable as he was in his opinions—the consciousness of the hatred that would dog his steps may have tended to disturb his nerves, and to perplex his brain. He had been over-wearied with the fatigues of the Session; and he had astonished and grieved his friends of late by extraordinary tales of conspiracies against his private character,—of way-layings in the parks, and threats in the street against his purse, his reputation, and his life. He repaired to his country-seat, to refresh himself by rest and change of ideas, while some of his colleagues went to Scotland in attendance upon the King. Mr. Canning meantime was gone to Liverpool, to bid farewell to his constituents before embarking for India. There, while he looked abroad upon the sea from his window at Seaforth House, he had awful news to ponder,—news which met the King on his landing at Leith,—news which struck the despots of Europe aghast upon their thrones,—news which was hailed with clasped hands and glistening eyes by aliens in many a provincial town in England, and with imprudent shouts by conclaves of patriots abroad.

“I have this moment heard from Liverpool,” writes the King to his Chancellor, “of the melancholy death of his and my dear friend, poor Londonderry.” “Poor Londonderry” had destroyed himself. “In common with every body,” writes the Chancellor, “I am oppressed and much affected by the loss of the Marquis of Londonderry.” Every body was “much affected:” but every body was not “oppressed.” The relief to a multitude was so extra-

ordinary and portentous, that little children who carried the news, as children love to carry wonderful news, without knowing what it means, were astonished at the effect of their tidings, and saw, by the clasped hands and glistening eyes of aliens in English towns, that there was a meaning in the tidings beyond their comprehension. There are some now who, in mature years, cannot remember without emotion what they saw and heard that day. They could not know how the calamity of one man,—a man amiable, winning, and generous in the walk of his daily life,—could penetrate the recesses of a world, not as a calamity, but as a ray of hope in the midst of thickest darkness. This man was the screw by which England had riveted the chains of nations. The screw was drawn, and the immovable despotism might now be overthrown. It was not only the sufferers who thought so. “My great object,” continues the King to his Chancellor,—“my great object, my good friend, in writing to you to-night, is to tell you that I have written to Liverpool, and I do implore of you not to *lend yourself* to any arrangement *whatever*, until my return to town. This, indeed, is Lord Liverpool’s own proposal; and as you may suppose, *I* have joined *most cordially* in the proposition. It will require the most *prudent foresight* on *my* part relative to the new arrangements that must now necessarily take place. You may easily judge of the state of my mind.”

Others could judge of the state of the King’s mind, nearly as well as the Chancellor. He was afraid of having to accept Canning as a Minister. While the crowd at Westminster Abbey greeted the removal of Lord Londonderry’s coffin from the hearse with “a shout which echoed loudly through every corner of the Abbey,” Mr. Canning was received with acclamations in the streets of Liverpool, and at a festival “to which five hundred gentlemen sat down.” They had a persuasion that they should not lose him now. They could not be sure of this; for, as he told them, he did not himself know what to expect. “I know as little,” he said, “as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things.” But every one was aware, and no one more than the King, that Mr. Canning was the only man equal to the post which was vacant, and that he must now fill it. It was a sore necessity: but circumstances were too strong for the royal and ministerial will. Yet “it was not till the 8th of September that Lord Liverpool requested to see Mr. Canning. An interview took place on the 11th, when the Foreign Office was offered to him by the Premier, and accepted after a struggle.” There was much of struggle in the business: struggle in the minds of the King and future colleagues who feared and disliked him; and no little struggle to him who well knew that he was entering on a career where he would ever find opposition in his front, and hatred by his side. What the struggle was to cost him was shown on a day too near for the interests of the world. But he was full of chivalrous courage; and he entered manfully on his task of liberating nations.

On the 17th of September, the Duke of Wellington set out for Verona, to attend the Congress where Lord Londonderry had been expected: and Lord Amherst went to India in the place of Mr. Canning. Thus, while man had proposed, did God dispose; and the destinies of the world were thereby changed, beyond human calculation.

1822.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 464.

Annual Register, 1822, p. 181.

Life of Canning, p. 322.

Canning’s Speeches, p. 373.

Life of Canning, p. 322.

MR. CANNING FOREIGN SECRETARY.

Annual Register, 1822, pp. 183, 184.

LORD AMHERST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA.

CHAPTER V.

1822.

POLICY OF CAS-
TLEREAGH.

THERE was abundant reason for the rejoicing which spread through the world on the death of Lord Londonderry: and the shout which rang through the Abbey when his coffin was taken from the hearse was natural enough, though neither decent nor humane. When a man's acts have proved him an enemy to his race, his race will not desire that he should live to continue those acts: and the case is not altered by any evidence that that man's eulogists can bring that he meant no harm; that he meant some kind of good; and that he was admired and beloved in private for certain qualities of his character. All these things may be true; as indeed they are likely to be; for the cases are rare in which men do deliberately mean harm, and propose to themselves to do things for the purpose of injuring others. The tyrant no more says to himself, "Now I will oppress my people, and make them miserable," than the liar proposes to himself "Now I will tell a lie," or the sot, "Now I will get drunk." In all these cases the sin is done through a wrong habit of mind. It comes out of narrow views, and selfish propensities; and not out of an express intention to do harm. The despots of Europe were not the less tyrants because they sincerely proposed to themselves in their congress to make their alliance a mirror of the gospel, and to promote peace on earth by means which could not but drive men at one another's throats, and make the very name of a religious sanction ridiculous. The simple truth was that they did not understand the gospel they invoked, and were ignorant of the relation they held to their people. If the issue of their counsels was that the many were made miserable, it is natural enough that the many should rejoice at the withdrawal of the chief counsellor. It was as natural that a shout should be raised in Europe, and echoed from the Andes, on the death of Londonderry, as that a groan should force its way, and tremble through the ocean to the shores of the New World, when, too soon after, Canning also disappeared from the council board of nations.

Lord Londonderry may be called the chief counsellor, because England certainly had the determining power as to the principles and grounds on which the policy of Europe was to proceed. If a true Englishman had been present who would have taken for granted such things as are usually taken for granted in England, and wherever a representative system early impresses statesmen with a sense of the value of men and their welfare, the parcelling out of Europe could hardly have gone on as audaciously as it did in the first instance, or the government of nations by a cabinet of sovereigns, through subsequent years. But Lord Londonderry had a mind too narrow to comprehend the constitution of the country he helped to govern, and by far too shallow to admit in its greatness the idea of the new era of peace on which the world had entered. He could not rouse or elevate the minds of the potentates who sur-

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rounded him, as England might and should have roused and elevated, at that juncture, from her disinterestedness, the better impulses of Europe. He entered for amusement, as it were, into the game which others were playing for stakes. He joined with others in fixing the boundaries of Europe, as men lay out an estate. As proprietors point out the convenience of a brook here—a rising ground or a wood there—and consider, in their own way, the welfare of the resident serfs, this party of potentates settled about the Rhine, and the Alps, and the interior forests; and threw together Belgium and Holland, and spread out the new Prussia, and disposed of Poland and Lombardy, and accommodated or bartered with each other about the boundaries of their imperial estates. The representative of England was the one who should have reminded them that the inhabitants were the party to decide under what government they would live; and that nationality can no more be imposed than it can be uprooted in a day. But Lord Londonderry was not a man to whom these primary considerations ever did, or ever could occur; and those at home, who sent him, were not the men who would spontaneously instruct him in a functional duty which he could not perceive for himself. Therefore, as nations are not serfs, and as the potentates were not, in this case, the unquestioned proprietors of men, the result did not answer to the gospel promises of Congress; and the issues of the Holy Alliance were not exactly peace on earth, and good-will among men.

From this time forward, accordingly, the class of sovereigns and of peoples led lives as different as if they had been of different races; as if, instead of the paternal and filial relation between them which was pretended, there were no relations at all. At the Congress of Verona, in 1822, where the Duke of Wellington attended in the place of the deceased Lord Londonderry, “the style of compliment adopted bordered, in some instances, upon the ridiculous. The old Bourbon, Ferdinand of Naples, though he had his good qualities, and no small share of humour and untrained sagacity, was notoriously the least educated, and the most thoughtless, indolent, and ignorant king in all Europe; but, as he chanced to be the oldest of the kings that met at Verona, they called him the Nestor of that royal congress. . . . The wordy and flowery Chateaubriand, who was present as a French negotiator, has turned it into a book and a romance.” At home, the King of Prussia amused himself and his advisers with devising a plan of a new nobility, which should suddenly become as imposing and influential as if it had been a thousand years old. Ferdinand of Spain was inventing tinsel ornaments for the Virgin. The Princes of Germany were putting off the irksome task of preparing the constitutions they had promised to their peoples. The King of Sweden was ordering the Storting of Norway not to think of abolishing their order of hereditary nobility. The Emperor of Russia was gratifying his benevolent feelings, by ordaining comparative personal freedom for his serfs, while stringently training his slave-army, and making military decoration the reward of all kinds of merit. The restored Bourbons of France were studying how best to impose dumbness on their noisy nation. The King of Sardinia was swimming paper ducks in a wash basin, to while away his days. The Emperor of Austria was, with Prince Metternich’s help, devising sufferings and insults for the bodies and souls of the Confaloniere and Pellicos, who, troublesome

THE PRINCES OF
EUROPE.

Cabinet History of
England, xxv. 77.

1822.

THE PEOPLES OF
EUROPE.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 210.

Annual Register,
1820; Chron. 42.

Penny Cyclopaedia,
Art. Kotzebue.

Foreign Newspa-
per, June 1820.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 211.

Annual Register,
1820, p. 211.
Life of Follen, i.
52, 585.

children as they were to such a father, would not accept his fatherly rule in peace, or agree that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. While the members of the Holy Alliance were thus employed, there was business of a different kind going on among the multitude below them.

In Denmark, the young theologian, Dampé, suspended from his public preaching, was giving private lectures on religion and politics; and in his study preparing plans for revolutionizing the kingdom, till he was shut up for life in solitude and silence. In Paris, towards midnight of a certain Sunday, Louvel was waiting outside the Opera-house, his hand upon the dagger with which he hoped to cut off the successor to the throne of France by the murder of the Duc de Berri. In Germany, certain watchful eyes were counting the letters which Kotzebue sent through the post-office, to inform the Russian autocrat of "the state of literature and public opinion in the cities;" that is, of the open songs, and secret societies by which the university students were endeavouring to rouse and organize the citizens for a purpose of constitutional demands: and the young fanatic, Sand, was secretly nourishing his resolution to free the land from the spy. When the act was done, and Sand was sent after his victim, "thousands of spectators hastened, if possible, to get some drops of his blood, or some of his hair. The chair on which he sat when he underwent his punishment was purchased of the executioner by a society for six louis-d'ors. No disorder, however, took place." The time was not come for what newspapers call "disorder," though there was much of what the sovereigns considered so. The professors had "not yet completely learned to confine themselves to their proper province;" they forgot the morals of the students in teaching them the principles of politics. Even at Vienna, and in the metropolitan seat of learning, such a spirit appeared that the Emperor was compelled to have recourse to "severe measures," to control the teachings of the masters of learning. Along the Elbe, the Maine, and the Rhine, a silent symbol was put forth which troubled the repose of rulers on their thrones. For hundreds of miles men appeared in the old German costume, which suggested to everybody thoughts of an "ancient ideal system of Teutonic freedom." In the streets of Jena and Heidelberg, and under the walls of the ducal palace at Darmstadt, a song was heard—the celebrated "Great Song," "Princes arise, ye people rise!"—which was all discord to the ears of princes, all music to the hearts of the people, and whose authorship could never, by threat or stratagem, be discovered. While the Emperor, at St. Petersburg, was dispensing his benevolences, his brother Constantine was torturing Polish officers at Warsaw, and teaching the most rapid lessons of rebellion to the crowds gathered about the great parade of the city. When any officer was declared to have failed to bring up his horse to a hair's breadth in the line, he was compelled to leap his horse over a pyramid of bayonets so high that it was barely possible to escape impalement of one or both: if both escaped, the feat was to be done again, and then a third time; and after the popular cry of "Shame!" and military intercession had compelled the Prince to release his victim, it was no surprise to any one that that victim disappeared in the night, and for ever. This Prince was, it is true, a sort of Caliban, and no more like the ordinary run of princes than that of men in general; but the world saw him in command of an army, and beheld in these scenes a

spectacle of royal sport and popular suffering; and it went with other things to deepen the abyss between sovereigns and subjects.

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SPANISH REVOLUTION.

In Spain, there was no longer any pause or any disguise. In the south, Colonel Riego rose, in the beginning of 1820, and proclaimed the Constitution of 1812. He was soon disabled, by accidents of the season and of fortune; and every endeavour was made to conceal from the rest of the kingdom what had happened near Cadiz. It is doubtless more conceivable that such an attempt should be made in Spain than that an English cabinet should hope to prevent the people of Scotland knowing of a rising in Dorsetshire: but it was yet too absurd to succeed. All Spain presently knew of Riego's enterprise; and the greater part of the nation immediately rose. In a few days, the rising was in a state to be reported to all Europe as the Revolution in Spain. At the end of February, the king saw his generals and his best troops joining the liberal cause. On the 10th of March, he published his intention of convening the Cortes, and instituting various reforms. But it was too late. The people of Madrid assembled round his palace, with shouts for the constitution; and on the evening of that same 10th of March, the feeble Ferdinand promised and proclaimed the Constitution of 1812.

Annual Register, 1820, p. 255.

OTHER REVOLUTIONS.

This Spanish Revolution was the signal for many risings. In August, Portugal followed; and before the year was out, Naples had demanded and obtained the proclamation of the Spanish Constitution. Then Piedmont prepared for a similar struggle, and believed liberty to be secure when Charles Albert, the present King of Sardinia, and then Prince of Carignano, swore that he would lay down his life for the cause. He laid down other lives, however, instead of his own; drawing back at the critical moment, and in fact, if not in purpose, betraying his confederates and their cause. And now occurred the circumstances which in reality assembled the Congress at Verona, though the pretext was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. While Spain and Portugal were shouting at the fall of the Inquisition and many other ancient wrongs, and Germany was chanting the echoes of freedom, and Piedmont and Lombardy were rapidly arming, and Naples was triumphing, and Sicily was trembling, as if the very Titan beneath her mountain were about to rise, what was doing in France? The King of France was engrossed with the fear that his beloved subjects would catch a fever. That was the great affair in France in 1821. "A most pestilent fever" had broken out at Barcelona the autumn before; and the French government, which took little apparent notice of the political epidemic which had appeared at Cadiz and Corunna, set up a vigorous opposition to this bilious fever at Barcelona. It does not appear that the disease spread beyond a small district: but the passes of the Pyrenees were filled with French troops; only one road was left open; and every thing which passed in and out of Spain by that road was very critically examined. Every ass, and every handful of fruit was surveyed: and any person who passed the line without leave, anywhere from sea to sea, was to be shot. These precautions were so extreme, and continued so long after the epidemic had ceased to be heard of, that everybody saw that the fever was not the real object of the cordon. There had been, in fact, much correspondence between the French and Spanish liberals. The Spaniards had been, as usual, too forward and boastful, representing the liberal cause as more advanced than it was, in their

Annuaire Historique Universelle, 1821, chap. iv.

FRENCH ARMY OF OBSERVATION. Annuaire Historique Universelle, 1821, p. 465.

Life of Mackintosh, ii. 414.

1822.

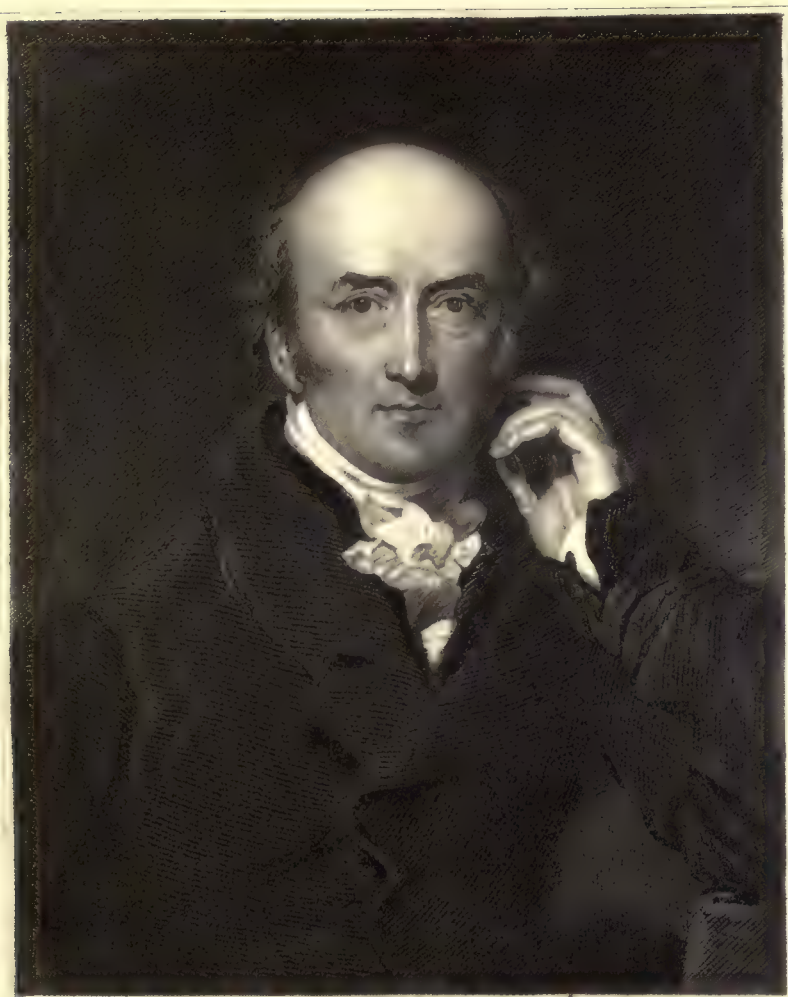
own country and everywhere else; and the French sovereign had some reason to fear for his throne. Within a short time, so many conspiracies were broken up, and so many risings actually took place, that it is probable there was an understanding between the Secret Societies, of other countries and those of France. From time to time, while these things were going on, more and more forces were posted along the Spanish frontier: till at last they looked so like a formidable army, that it became time for nations in alliance with both France and Spain to inquire what all these preparations were for. It was too late now to say any thing more about the Barcelona fever; for the time we are speaking of was the autumn of 1822—the date of the Congress of Verona.

When the Duke of Wellington left London, to attend the Congress, Mr. Canning had been in office only forty-eight hours. It may be doubted whether he, bringing into office the comprehensive views of a by-stander, believed, as the Duke of Wellington did, that the object of the Congress was to consider the affairs of Greece, in prevention of a war between Russia and Turkey. At Paris, the Duke was informed by M. Villèle that the affairs of Spain would also be deliberated on: and he wrote home to desire instructions.

Hansard, viii. 574.

POLICY OF CANNING.

Here, in our view, is the parting point of the former and the later foreign policy of England. The moment of sending off the reply to the Duke of Wellington was one of inestimable importance, and worthy of earnest notification in history. The wording of the despatch was simple enough; and there may be little in its contents to indicate its insignificance: but there is just enough to show that a new spirit had arisen in that conspicuous sphere; and that the functions of that new spirit was not to bind but to unloose. When the statesmen of the Continent heard that Wellington was to be the substitute of Londonderry at the Congress, they no doubt thought that the actual representative would be as good for their purposes as the proposed one, who had been called away to a very different congress: and it was probably a long time before they became fully aware of the magnitude of the change which had taken place through the substitution of personages at home. It was said everywhere for years, and is even at this day said by some, that the death of Londonderry made no difference whatever at Verona: that he would have protested against despotic aggression in Spain and elsewhere: and that Canning's opposition did not go beyond protests. But the character of a man's mind stamps itself upon all his acts: and protests to the same general effect from two men of opposite character and views may be as truly unlike each other as if they were opposed in substance. It was long before Mr. Canning did any official act so new and singular as to startle the world into a conviction that here was a new man who would reverse the old policy: yet he wrought the revolution as effectually as if he had done it by proclamation. He proclaimed nothing which could plunge England and other countries into a war, and precipitate the liberals everywhere into a rising which he could not undertake to sustain: but he furthered the liberties of the world quite as much by his heart being honestly with them, and his heartiness showing itself in all his transactions. Where Londonderry's despatches would have been vapid and meagre, because he preferred transacting business, as far as possible, by confidential conversation, Canning's were frank and glowing, though moderate and clear. Where, in the palaces, cafés, and streets of Continental cities,



Engraved by J. Smith

.CANNING.

From a Picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.



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nothing could have been reported of Londonderry but what would have shown him a true brother of his colleagues in Congress—as hard and unsympathising, as narrow, and as presumptuous as the rest who proposed to give the world a new image of the gospel—the speeches of Canning were creating a new thought and a new soul. Never did the fires of western forests run through the wilderness more gloriously than the speeches of Canning through the political wilds of Europe, under the deep night of the Holy Alliance. In those western wildernesses, the unaccustomed and the timid tremble and shriek, and hang together as they see the spreading flame, and hear the rush and roar, and think of the waste of ashes that will be seen to-morrow: but the hardy freeman enjoys the sight; enjoys the sprinkling and scattering blazes which seize upon decay and rottenness, to turn them into freshness and fruitfulness. And so it was when the utterance of Canning in the British Parliament ran over Europe, kindling as it went. It was hateful and terrific to despots, because it leaped upon their abuses, and scorched their vanities, and made of their antiquated dogmas ashes for a new growth of opinion: but the restless spirits of that time were quieted by that utterance;—quieted not by compulsion, but from within. They could sit still, instead of prowling about under the shadow of that night, while they had this kindling to watch, and its promise to dwell upon. Nothing in the career of Canning is more striking than the quietness of his official action by diplomatic missions and state papers, while the whole heart of Europe beat whenever he opened his lips to speak, and was ready to burst when he had done.

The reply to the Duke of Wellington's application for instructions ran as follows: "If there be a determined project to interfere, by force or by menace, in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his Majesty's Government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference, so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, as well as utterly impracticable in execution, that when the necessity arises, or (I would rather say) when the opportunity offers, I am to instruct your Grace at once frankly and peremptorily to declare, that to any such interference, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party." This was decided enough: and it may be considered decisive. The assembled potentates said much—and much might reasonably be said—of the violent character of the liberalism of the time; of the danger to empire when civil reforms were insisted upon and undertaken (as in Spain) by the soldiery; of the certain disorganization of society if secret associations were permitted virtually to rule; and of the ferocious character of wars thus occasioned: and all this appeared conclusive to persons who did not perceive how their own policy had generated all these perils: yet it was not determined at the Congress of Verona to interfere with Spain by force of arms. France pleaded strongly for such interference, on the ground of her own dangers from interior disturbances, and her vicinity to the revolutionized country: yet no interference with Spain was determined on at the Congress of Verona; and it was this instruction to the British representative which prevented it. He who issued that instruction saw that to make war on the plea of preventing war was the course most full of danger; and his plan was to endeavour, by all possible prudence, to preserve peace.

Mr. Canning's "system" was much talked of at the time: and this was

Hansard, viii 571.

Annual Register,
1822, 218.

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not to be wondered at, at a season when all government was supposed to be carried on by "systems." System was the one idea of the members of the Holy Alliance; and it was that which solely occupied the mind of Lord Londonderry. His successor differed from him in nothing more than in this. Mr. Canning saw that there can be no stability or working power in any system but by virtue of the principle involved in it: and his was a mind which could resort directly and constantly to the principle, leaving the details of operation to form and discover themselves as they were wanted. Being sure of his principle, he could thenceforth rely upon it; and hence his quietude in official action, his calmness and power of resource amidst the fluctuations of a disturbed time, and the consistency of his foreign policy amidst the ever-changing aspects of circumstances whose total elements no enlightened mind would dream of comprehending. The Metternichs, Alexanders, and Ferdinands made a plan which they declared complete; and they would have endeavoured to coerce the every elements themselves when they arose to shatter it. The philosopher who had now come among them saw the narrowness and frailty of all political systems in an age when mankind had learned to live and move; and he knew that the age of selfwill and system for rulers was past: while the ruling power of principles is everlasting. To speak of Canning's "system," therefore, is not to do justice to him. To understand him, we must look for his principle first; and then for the practical purpose which lay nearest to it.

His principle was the preservation of Peace: and his immediate practical purpose was to dissolve, by the quietest means, the Holy Alliance.

Life of Canning,
p. 328.

Mr. Canning never concealed that he would have been glad to have left England unrepresented at the Congress of Verona, as the most immediate method of withdrawing her from the Holy Alliance: but the time was so short that the step would have been too hazardous. It took him two years to set England free for her own action abroad: but he did it peacefully and effectually. It was no very easy task. The sovereigns abroad and their ministers had carefully and constantly represented England as favourable to the principles of the Holy Alliance; and every countenance was given to this by Lord Londonderry's conduct, and by our war against revolution in France. All the rulers looked to England for aid against revolution everywhere. And the suffering nations, longing to rise, when assured that England did not favour the principles of the Holy Alliance, expected from her that she should aid revolution everywhere. Both these expectations included a breaking up of Peace; and the preservation of peace was Mr. Canning's first object: so he gratified neither of the expectant parties.

CONGRESS OF VERONA.
Hansard, viii. 877.

Life of Canning,
p. 330.

But occasion soon offered for declaring the new policy of England, and for loosening the bonds of the Alliance. It presently came out that the French army on the frontier of Spain was not wanted against the Barcelona fever, and would march on into Spain, to aid Ferdinand against his subjects, and put down the Constitution. The Emperor of Russia was delighted; and all the other potentates applauded and promised aid. But the Duke of Wellington followed his instructions, dissented and remonstrated, and withdrew. The instructions in this instance were clear and decided; Mr. Canning's words being, that "if a declaration of any such determination should be made at

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Verona, come what might, he should refuse the King's consent to become a party to it, even though the dissolution of the Alliance should be the consequence of the refusal." One consequence of the refusal was a correspondence between Mr. Canning, the flowery Chateaubriand, and the bigot Polignac, wherein the highflown royalists expatiated on the blessings to the Spaniards of seeing their King free to give them, with French aid, such a constitution as should be best for them. Mr. Canning could not allow this to pass; and protested against the doctrine, that constitutional rights are conferred by the royal pleasure. In noticing the Speech of the French King on opening the Chambers, in which the purpose of invading Spain was declared, while the Duc d'Angoulême laid his hand on his sword, and raised his eyes to heaven,—Mr. Canning declared that the Speech appeared to mean, that "the free institutions of the Spanish people could only be legitimately held from the spontaneous gift of the sovereign, first restored to absolute power, and then divesting himself of such portion of that power as he might think proper to part with:" that "the Spanish nation could not be expected to subscribe to this principle, nor could any British statesman uphold or defend it. . . . It is indeed a principle which strikes at the root of the British Constitution."

Hansard, viii. 948.

After all M. Chateaubriand's declarations and fine sentiments in favour of Peace, the Duc d'Angoulême laid his hand on his sword again, on the other side of the Pyrenees. The French invaded Spain. England had done what she could in declaring for the right, and seceding from the Congress which advocated the wrong: she now held herself neutral. It was on the 14th of April, 1823, that Mr. Canning made in the House all the declarations rendered necessary by the act of France in invading Spain. He explained the course and issue of all the attempts at mediation made by the English Government, the grounds of the neutrality which she had now finally avowed; and pointed out what must be the conduct of England in regard to Portugal and the South American colonies of Spain, in certain contingencies which might arise. If Portugal joined Spain in repelling the French, there was no call upon England to interfere; but if Portugal, remaining quiescent, were to be attacked, that attack "would bring Great Britain into the field with all her force, to support the independence of her ancient and her faithful ally." As for the South American colonies, it was clear that Spain, though claiming them still as hers by right, had in fact lost all power over them. If France should, in the course of the war, capture any of them, so that it would become at last a question whether they should be ceded, and to whom, it would be necessary for all parties to know that the British Government "considered the separation of the colonies from Spain to have been effected to such a degree, that it would not tolerate for an instant any cession which Spain might make of colonies, over which she did not exercise a direct and positive influence. To such a declaration the British Government had at last been forced."

FRENCH INVASION
OF SPAIN.INTENTIONS OF
ENGLAND.

Hansard, viii. 889.

Hansard, viii. 891.

The declaration of neutrality was painful and disconcerting to some of the best men in parliament and out of it. They were so accustomed to speak of England as the champion of the liberties of the world, and had so completely understood her secession from the Holy Alliance as declaratory of this, that it appeared to them a disgrace to look on, without taking part in, one of

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PRONOUNCED ON
BY PARLIAMENT.

the most indefensible wars against liberty which had ever been entered into. The Foreign Secretary had much to encounter in the House—angry rebuke from some, and pathetic expostulation from others. When the debate on the negotiations relative to Spain had been twice adjourned, Mr. Canning offered, on the third night, an explanation of his proceedings and reasons, which secured him the enthusiastic support of the House and the country. The motion which had occasioned the debate was one of censure of the feebleness of tone assumed by Government, in the recent negotiations; and the amendment proposed was, a declaration of gratitude and approbation in regard to what had been done. At the close, the Opposition members were about to leave the house in a body; but some Ministerial members called for a division. It was only for want of room in the lobby that any one appeared to vote against the Government. The whole assembly poured into the lobby, till it could hold no more; and then the twenty members who were shut in were compelled to pass for an Opposition, though there were Ministerialists among them. They amounted to 20, in a house of 372.

Hansard, viii. 1548.

One passage of Mr. Canning's speech spread over the world, and was vehemently hailed or resented wherever it reached:—

Hansard, viii. 1483.

"I contend, Sir, that whatever might grow out of a separate conflict between Spain and France (though matter for grave consideration) was less to be dreaded than that all the great powers of the Continent should have been arrayed together against Spain; and that although the first object, in point of importance, indeed, was to keep the peace altogether—to prevent any war against Spain—the first in point of time was to prevent a general war; to change the question from a question between the Allies on one side, and Spain on the other, to a question between nation and nation. This, whatever the result might be, would reduce the quarrel to the size of ordinary events, and bring it within the scope of ordinary diplomacy. The immediate object of England, therefore, was to hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the Congress; to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *Areopagitical** spirit, which the Memorandum of the British Cabinet, of May, 1820, describes as 'beyond the sphere of the original conception, and understood principles of the Alliance'—'an alliance never intended as a union for the government of the world, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other states.' And this, I say, was accomplished." "Canning," says his biographer, "always protested against the system of holding congresses for the government of the world."

Life of Canning,
p. 334.

As this noted speech declared, the object of Great Britain was accomplished in the potentates at Verona being deterred from declaring war against Spain. The matter lay now between the two countries which were separated by the

* The Council of Areopagus, at Athens, was remarkable for its penetrating and superintending character; pronouncing on the economy of private houses, and judging children for tormenting birds. It was a more meddling council than it became any congress to resemble, in a later age of the world.

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Pyrenees; and peace was preserved elsewhere. What his idea was of the peace to be preserved by Great Britain, he manifested in a speech delivered at Plymouth in the autumn of the same year, when the French and Spaniards were at war,—1823. “Our ultimate object was,” he said, “the peace of the world: but let it not be said that we cultivate peace either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for, war; on the contrary, if, eight months ago, the Government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should unfortunately be necessary, every month of peace that has since passed has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town is a proof they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness—how soon, upon any call of patriotism or of necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing—instinct with life and motion;—how soon it would ruffle, at it were, its swelling plumage;—how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of these magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself: while apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion.”

For that adequate occasion he kept watch, as vigilantly as any advocate of war could have done; for he was not one to sacrifice the honour or influence of the country for the sake of the peace for which these were, and always must be, the guarantees. When it was necessary to speak and act again, Great Britain spoke and acted. The French overran Spain, from end to end. The Spanish liberals had fewer resources, less union, and less hope than their enemy; and they were cruelly betrayed, not only by some few traitors from among themselves, but by the boastings of the French liberals, who had assured them that a large portion of the invading army would fraternize with the invaded, on touching Spanish soil. Instead of this happening, however, the French soldiery no sooner appeared from the passes of the Pyrenees than the royalist minority in Spain were joined by such numbers as enabled them to cope with the constitutional forces, even without the aid of a foreign invader. The soldiery were certainly royalist; and they showed it now. The French entered Madrid on the 24th of May, within a month after the delivery, by Mr. Canning, of his exposition of the British policy in regard to this conflict. The liberals were still in possession of the person of the King, who was imprisoned by them at Cadiz. There he amused himself with attempting to make signals to friends in the blockading vessels, or outside the walls,—taking a sudden fancy for sending up rockets and flying kites. Rockets and kites innumerable were ready to go up at the same moment with the King's, to perplex the royalist watchers outside. He obtained his freedom at last from the hopelessness of his enemies. They dismissed him from Cadiz on the 1st of October, to join his French friends: and two days afterwards they surrendered

Annuaire Historique, 1823, p. 392.

Annuaire Historique, 1823, p. 472.

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OVERTHROW OF
SPANISH REVOLU-
TION.

Annuaire Histo-
rique, 1823, p. 483.

Life of Mackin-
tosh, ii. 414.

SOUTH AMERICAN
PROVINCES.

Life of Canning,
p. 334.

Hansard, x. 708.

the town, and gave up the cause. As it was not the cause of the whole people,—as the clergy and the great body of the population welcomed the French, it is clear that no aid given by Great Britain could have saved Spain, or materially benefited it, while it would have precipitated war all over Europe, and violated the great principle of non-interference with the affairs of other nations. Ferdinand immediately annulled by proclamation all the acts of the Constitutional government,—the whole legislation and administration of Spain for the preceding three years and a half: and thus, when Riego had been hanged on a very high gibbet, without being permitted to speak to the people, and when some treacherous generals had sworn new vows of fidelity, did the feeble King suppose that all was set right, and that affairs might now go on as if nothing disagreeable had happened. This was a mistake, of course; but it was not one to be wondered at. He knew nothing of the principles of liberty, and of the vitality which resides in them; and he desired to know as little as possible of the consequences of revolutions. There were some such consequences near at hand which soon compelled his notice.

The French Ministry were, as Constant afterwards said, so afraid of the result of the invasion of Spain, that, sustained as they were by the sympathy of almost all the rulers of Europe, they would have gladly drawn back, at the last moment, if the leaders of the Spanish Cortes would have saved their honour by some “moderate concessions.” It is probable that what the French called “moderate concessions” might appear to the Cortes an unprincipled and fatal yielding. However that may be, the French dropped all their timidity and doubt in the course of their sweep over Spain; and we find them next eager to subjugate, on behalf of Spain, the insurgent colonies in South America. Mr. Canning had declared in parliament, with a prospective view to such a juncture as this, that Great Britain would not tolerate any proposed cession, by Spain to France, of any of those colonies over which Spain had ceased to have an effective control. It could not therefore be now permitted that France should carry the war across the Atlantic, and attempt to capture those colonies which Spain could not pretend to be able to cede. On this occasion the British Minister pronounced words which stayed, like a spell, the preparations for war on one side of the Atlantic, while they kindled life and hope on the other, from the sea to the Andes, and over to the sea again. “We will not,” said Mr. Canning, “interfere with Spain in any attempt which she may make to reconquer what were once her colonies; but we will not permit any third power to attack or reconquer them for her.” It was a proud position which England held when this declaration was made. Her Minister had declared his desire that she should hold a majestic station among the conflicts of the world; “that, in order to prevent things from going to extremities, she should keep a distinct middle ground, staying the plague both ways.” Accordingly, when some young liberals in England had been eager to repair to certain of the South American colonies (as they were still called) to throw themselves into the combat for independence, Mr. Canning had brought in a bill to stop their proceeding, as one wholly irreconcilable with our relations with Spain; manifesting, however, very plainly, his expectation at that time that the colonies could not fail to achieve their independence. He now “stayed the plague” on the other side. He applied, in October, 1823, to the

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French government for an explanation of its intentions in regard to the South American colonies, in return for a similar explanation from England: and it was in the course of this correspondence that he made the declaration quoted above. Other words, of no meaner weight, were put upon record.

The French minister, the Prince de Polignac, declared "that he could not conceive what could be meant, under the present circumstances, by a pure and simple acknowledgment of the independence of the Spanish colonies; since, those countries being actually distracted by civil wars, there existed no government in them which could offer any appearance of solidity; and that the acknowledgment of American independence, so long as such a state of things continued, appeared to him nothing less than a real sanction of anarchy. . . . That, in the interest of humanity, and especially in that of the Spanish colonies, it would be worthy of the European governments to concert together the means of calming, in those distant and scarcely civilized regions, passions blinded by party spirit; and to endeavour to bring back to a principle of union in government, whether monarchical or aristocratical, people among whom absurd and dangerous theories were now keeping up agitation and disunion." Here was the principle and procedure of the Holy Alliance openly proposed for the coercion of the South American people. They were to live, not under such government as they might prefer, but under such as the rulers of Europe should impose upon them for their good. The reply of Mr. Canning was short, but large enough to enclose and exhibit *his* principle and procedure—that none but the parties concerned have any business with the form of government under which any people may choose to live; and that Great Britain was equally ready to recognise institutions founded by people and by kings. His reply was, "that, however, desirable the establishment of a monarchical form of government in any of those provinces might be, on the one hand, or whatever might be the difficulties in the way of it, on the other hand, his government could not take upon itself to put it forward as a condition of their recognition." Hansard, x. 712.

In the preceding declaration, it had been announced to Spain that consuls would be sent to South America, to protect the interests of British trade there—a list being furnished of the places to which they would be sent. These consuls were now appointed and despatched; and this was the decisive act by which Great Britain, following the example of the United States, recognised the independence of the South American provinces of Spain. Hansard, x. 710.

Calm and dignified as appears the attitude of Great Britain throughout these transactions, which have so largely determined the fortunes of the world, there was much struggle within the breast of the Queen of the Seas—the umpire, as she was now made—in the rivalry, not only of the old world and the new, but of the new and the olden time. Her Foreign Minister spoke with decision and clearness in all his correspondence, but it was from out of the midst of turmoil. He met with almost as much resistance at home as abroad; and he was twice on the verge of retiring from office, before he finally achieved the recognition of South American independence. Up to this time, Lord Sidmouth had retained a seat in the Cabinet, without office: he now resigned it, partly because he could not agree with those "of his colleagues who advocated the immediate recognition by his Majesty of the independence Life of Canning,
p. 336.
Life of Lord Sid-
mouth, iii. 414.

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of Buenos Ayres." Buenos Ayres and all the other struggling provinces might now date their declared independence from this year; and little as they then knew, or may know now, how to consolidate their freedom, the proud boast of the British Minister was a true one which he uttered when, two years later, he gave an account of his policy of this time. The speech is one which ought to stand in every history of the period, for its effect upon every living mind. "It was an era in the senate," says one, applying what was said of the eloquence of Chatham. "It was an epoch in a man's life," says another, "to have heard him. I shall never forget the deep moral earnestness of his tone, and the blaze of glory that seemed to light up his features." It having been objected that the balance of dignity and honour among nations had been affected by the French occupation of Spain, which was thought to have exalted France and lowered England, Mr. Canning replied, "I must beg leave to say that I dissent from that averment. The House knows—the country knows—that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, his Majesty's Government did all in their power to prevent it; that we resisted it by all means short of war. I have just now stated some of the reasons why we did not think the entry of that army into Spain a sufficient ground for war; but there was, in addition to those which I have stated, this peculiar reason, that whatever effect a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain might have, it probably would not have had the effect of getting that army out of Spain. In a war against France at that time, as at any other, you might perhaps have acquired military glory; you might, perhaps, have extended your colonial possessions; you might even have achieved, at great cost of blood and treasure, an honourable peace; but, as to getting the French out of Spain, that would have been the one object which you almost certainly would not have accomplished. How seldom, in the whole history of the wars of Europe, has any war between two great powers ended in the obtaining of the exact, the identical object for which the war was begun! Besides, Sir, I confess I think that the effects of the French occupation of Spain have been infinitely exaggerated. I do not blame those exaggerations, because I am aware that they are to be attributed to the recollections of some of the best times of our history; that they are the echoes of sentiments which, in the days of William and of Anne, animated the debates, and dictated the votes of the British Parliament. No peace was in those days thought safe for this country while the crown of Spain continued on the head of a Bourbon. But were not the apprehensions of those days greatly overstated? Has the power of Spain swallowed up the power of maritime England? Or does England still remain, after the lapse of more than a century, during which the crown of Spain has been worn by a Bourbon, niched in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar? . . . Again, Sir, is the Spain of the present day the Spain . . . whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, Sir, it was quite another Spain; it was the Spain within the limits of whose empire the sun never set; it was Spain 'with the Indies,' that excited the jealousies, and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors. But then, Sir, the balance of power! The entry of the French army into Spain disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! I have already said, that when the French army

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Hansard xvi. 395.

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entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted or resented that measure by war. But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power? Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their place among established political communities? The balance of power a century and a half ago was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and England. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her high station in European politics. Some years after that again, Prussia became not only a substantive, but a preponderating monarchy. Thus, while the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged. They became enlarged, in proportion to the increased number of considerable states—in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into the one or the other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other. It would be disingenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England; and it can hardly be supposed that the Government did not sympathise, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance than by a direct attack upon France; or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz?—No. I looked another way. I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain ‘with the Indies.’ I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.”

In this celebrated speech, Mr. Canning appears to take his stand where he avowed his wish that his country should stand, “not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles.” If we find in it a spirit higher than that of the allied potentates who would have ruled both hemispheres after the pattern of their antiquated ideas, we find in it also a tone lower than that of sympathy with the struggles for freedom which yet it was his policy to aid. When, as a listener tells us, “his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip; and age and sickness were forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius,”—it must have been the consciousness of power and of the soundness of his policy which inspired him: for he was certainly not, by his own profession, under the sway of emotions so lofty as the occasion created in others. It may be, however, that his sentiments were loftier than his professions. “All the while,” says the observer, “a serenity

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sat upon his brow, that pointed to deeds of glory." The deeds *were* glorious, however the doer may have assigned reasons of mere policy for them in an assembly which he could so sway as that they would have borne from him expressions of a higher political generosity. Perhaps he remembered how many were watching afar to catch up his words; the Holy Allies for their purposes, and many an eager malcontent for his: and this may have made him careful, in the midst of his emotions, to preserve his central stand between the imperial policies and the popular enthusiasms of the time. If so, he spoke wisely and well for such listeners, not only in his expositions of his principles and methods of peace, of non-interference, and of recognition of *de facto* powers, whatever their origin and date, but he offered them, in the course of the same chapter of events, a warning and a prophecy which has never been forgotten since, and is little likely to be forgotten now.

APPEAL FROM
PORTUGAL.

The occasion was the arrival of intelligence that Spain was interfering with Portugal, whose free constitution was hated and feared by the restored despot Ferdinand. Mr. Canning had formerly declared what our relations with Portugal were. If she chose to undertake any war on her own account, for the defence of freedom or any other cause, Great Britain had nothing to do with that: but, if she were attacked on account of her constitutional freedom, or for any other cause, Great Britain was bound by treaties, and by every obligation of good faith, to repair to her assistance. Such a case had arisen now—in December, 1826. Some Portuguese regiments had deserted to the Royalist cause in Spain. The Spanish government had repeatedly pledged itself to disarm and disperse these regiments: but it failed to do so; and permitted these regiments to make hostile inroads into Portugal, under the eyes of the Spanish authorities, and with every tacit assistance from them. On the night of Friday, the 8th of December, the British government received from the Princess Regent of Portugal an earnest application for "aid against a hostile aggression from Spain:" and the minister whose first principle of administration had been the preservation of peace was as prompt in action as if he had been eager for war. His own account of the affair is the shortest, plainest, and clearest. Short and plain as it is, it moved the heart of his immediate hearers first, and then of the nation, to an enthusiasm which will never be forgotten by those who lived at the time. "On Sunday, the 3rd of this month, we received from the Portuguese ambassador a direct and formal demand of assistance against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was—that although rumours had reached us through France, his Majesty's government had not that accurate information—that official and precise intelligence of facts—on which they could properly found an application to parliament. It was only on last Friday night that this precise information arrived. On Saturday, his Majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday, that decision received the sanction of his Majesty. On Monday, it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament: and this day, Sir—at the hour in which I have the honour of addressing you—the troops are on their march for embarkation."

Hansard, xvi. 334.

Hansard, xvi. 337.

There may be some wonder in Englishmen's minds at this day, as there certainly is in the minds of some foreigners, that this procedure and its explanation should have excited the enthusiasm that it did, in the House and the nation. It may be said, truly enough, that the Portuguese are but two or

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three millions of priests and slaves, who have thus far incessantly shown themselves incapable of freedom; and that their alliance can never be of material advantage to England, for purposes of commerce or any other fellowship. All this may be true; and yet there may be still feelings in the national heart regarding Portugal which might account for the enthusiasm of the time. The very discussion of our alliance with Portugal carries back the imagination to the time of Charles II., when we became possessed of Bombay, and when our government declared, in the affectionate style of ancient treaties, "the King of Great Britain does profess and declare, with the consent and advice of his council, that he will take the interest of Portugal and all its dominions to heart, defending the same with his utmost power, by sea and land, even as England itself." There were remembrances of the treaties of Queen Anne's time, and the watch then to be kept against Spain and France as now. The very words "our ancient and faithful ally," always used when our relations with Portugal are spoken of, stir a sentiment in her favour. Again, there was the generous complacency felt by the strong when appealed to by the weak,—the obligation being, in this case, not to disappoint the generous sentiment, because our good faith was engaged on the side of the appeal. Again, though the rational and firm desire of the British government and the majority of the people had been to preserve peace during the last anxious and troubled years, when despotism and revolution were everywhere in conflict, it had cost not a little to generous hearts, and also to minds not yet disenchanted from the spells of war, to refrain from rushing into conflict, and bringing the opposition of principles and prejudices to the arbitrament of battle. Mr. Brougham had said that "Great Britain was bound over in recognizances of £800,000,000 to keep the peace:" and this consideration—of debt and exhaustion—availed while there was no strong impulse in a contrary direction. But the moment that the movement of troops became a movement of good faith and generosity, the spirit of the nation broke through its restraints of prudence, and its silence of neutrality; and the Minister's announcement of the transmission of troops to Portugal was received with acclamations which shook the world. The troops anchored in the Tagus on the 25th of the same month: but they were not wanted. The winged darts of the Minister, his burning words, had done the necessary work with the speed of the winds. The revolted regiments slunk away from the frontier, and were dissolved. The French agent at Madrid stole away home: and King Ferdinand was profuse in his assurances of hatred of any power which would molest Portugal. More than that,—this speech was one which no censorship could exclude, or delay on its passage to those whom it concerned. The newspapers passed from hand to hand under the Spanish cloak: recitations of the Englishman's words went on in whispers under the bright Italian moon: and at Vienna and Warsaw, men's hearts swelled and their eyes shone as phrases from this speech were detected in common intercourse, and forthwith formed a sort of free-masonry among those who understood. The power lay in the warning and the prophecy which we mentioned above—and which we here present—the warning and prophecy of a War of Opinion in Europe. After referring to his desire and maintenance of peace, when the French entered Spain, four years before, Mr. Canning proceeded, "I then said that I feared that the next war which should be kindled

Hansard, xvi. 355.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 342.NEW ERA OF CON-
FLICT.

Hansard, xvi. 368.

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in Europe would be a war, not so much of armies as of opinions. Not four years have elapsed, and behold my apprehensions realized! It is, to be sure, within narrow limits that this war of opinion is at present confined: but it is a war of opinion that Spain (whether as government or as nation) is now waging against Portugal: it is a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. How long is it reasonable to expect that Portugal will abstain from retaliation? If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate,—and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country (however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it) could not, in such a case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which he might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new power in any future war which excites my most anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength; but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of such strength is, undoubtedly, a source of confidence and security; but in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to content ourselves with letting the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary." After describing the position of England as keeping in check the passions of the world, and the horror of the scene if she were to descend from her post of arbitrement to lead the conflict, he continued, "This, then, is the reason—a reason very different from fear—the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe: why I would bear much, and would forbear long; why I would (as I have said) put up with almost any thing that did not touch national faith and national honour—rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands—not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges: and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no further."

There was indeed no need to push these topics further. Enough was said. From this moment it was understood throughout the world, that whenever "the war of opinion in Europe" should involve Great Britain, the aspirants to political freedom would be on her side. It was now clear—clear to all sovereigns and to all people—that England had completely separated herself from the Holy Alliance. Her Foreign Minister had carried out his main principle,—the preservation of peace; and achieved the great practical purpose which lay nearest to it,—the destruction of the Holy Alliance. These four years were a short time in which to have secured such objects, and to have placed such a fame as his on its pinnacle.

During those four years, a few events had happened among our foreign allies which it is necessary briefly to refer to. The Princess Regent of Portugal has been mentioned in the place of the old King John VI. That feeble King had for a wife the sister of the Spanish king Ferdinand; and for a son (the second son) the notorious Don Miguel, who has since so pertinaciously troubled the repose of his own and other countries. This wife and son in the

spring of 1824, imprisoned and threatened the King, who was obliged to throw himself upon the protection of the English, and to escape from his own family on board a British vessel in the Tagus. Miguel was sent away on his travels, and the King reinstated. A year afterwards, the King acknowledged the independence of his great South American province of Brazil. Ten months afterwards he died; and his eldest son, Don Pedro, who had for a year been emperor of Brazil, must now choose whether to remain so, or to return to Portugal as its king. The choice between the two crowns was his. He chose to remain on his western throne: but he did what he could to influence the affairs of the European kingdom. He abdicated the Portuguese throne in favour of his eldest daughter; and he sent over with her a constitution for Portugal. It was this constitution which enraged the French and Spanish Courts, and caused the inroads upon Portugal which the British troops were sent to repel. The Princess Regent mentioned above was the sister of the Emperor of Brazil, who, under her father's will, administered the affairs of Portugal till her young niece could enter upon her dignity and her function. When Mr. Canning's great speech was made, then, King John VI. had been dead some months: Don Pedro was on the throne of Brazil; Don Miguel was on his travels, caballing wherever he went: and their sister Isabella was Princess Regent of Portugal, ruling the country in the name of the infant Queen, and according to the constitution sent over by Don Pedro.

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Annual Register,
1824, p. 186.Annual Register,
1825, p. 174.
Annual Register,
1826, p. 314.CROWNS OF POR-
TUGAL AND BRAZIL

Other sovereigns had died,—had slipped out of the Holy Alliance on the inexorable summons of death, when they would not attend to that of freedom. The ex-King of Sardinia, Emanuel Victor, was no longer an European potentate: but he had been conspicuous in the earlier meetings of the allies. He died in January, 1824, leaving his brother, Charles Felix, on the throne. In September of the same year died the King of France, after enjoying his restored royalty fourteen years. His had been the unhappy lot—to suffer adversity without being able to profit by it. Neither reverses nor restoration yielded any privilege of wisdom to him. His accession was as nothing to the world, and his death was nothing, except that he left his throne to be occupied by a brother yet more unenlightened, and more despotic in his tendencies, than himself. The “Nestor” of the Verona Congress, Ferdinand, of Naples and Sicily, followed his relative of Sardinia in a year. The Duchess de Berri was his grandchild: one daughter was wife to the King of Sardinia: another to the Duke of Orleans, whereby she became Queen of the French five years after her father's death. The King of Naples died of apoplexy: and the manner in which his death is notified indicates the ideas which beset the death-beds of kings who live in dread of revolutions. “The Nuncio, the Ambassador from Spain, the Austrian Minister, and the French Chargé d’Affaires, were introduced, with all the council, into the chamber of the King. His Majesty was lying on his back, with his mouth open, but his features unaltered; the left hand, which was uncovered, showed some marks of extravasated blood. The guards at the palace, and other public places, were doubled, as a measure of precaution, but the public tranquillity was not disturbed for a single moment.”

DEATH OF THE EX-
KING OF SARDINIA.OF THE KING OF
FRANCE.OF THE KING OF
NAPLES AND SI-
CILY.Annual Register,
1825, Chron. p. 218.OF THE EMPEROR
OF RUSSIA.

This could not be said on occasion of the death of a more prominent member of the alliance than this Verona Nestor. On the 1st of December of this

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Annual Register,
1825, p. 158.

year, 1825, Alexander of Russia died,—far away from his capital and his northern Court. Some believe that he determined to pass the winter in the South, because he knew himself to be hemmed in by conspirators at St. Petersburg. However that may be, he died of fever on a lofty cliff overlooking a vast expanse of the Black Sea, while his successor was in imminent peril from a plot so extensive that it was necessary to hush the matter up, as speedily as possible; and so mysterious that, to this day, nothing is clearly understood about it in the world. Whether Alexander would have lived long, and ruled as he chose, if he had escaped the fever which cut him off at Taganrog, there is no saying. There is every appearance of his having ruled as he chose up to the time of his last illness. What he chose was a benevolent method. What he lacked was a sense and knowledge of justice. He was not even aware that benevolence may operate as cruelty when it is not enlightened and guided by a principle of justice. Alexander will not appear to posterity altogether as the bland, kindly, courteous, Christian gentleman that he believed himself, and that he sincerely meant to be. He *was* bland, kindly, courteous, and a religious gentleman: but he was a pedant in intellect, and an oppressor on the throne. Nobody wept for him, even while there was fear that his savage brother Constantine would succeed him. The savage was, however, induced to set himself aside;—a wonderfully enlightened act,—such as some who are not Calibans are incapable of. The younger brother Nicholas succeeded; and walked up the steps of the throne amidst a thousand daggers pointed at his breast. How he charmed them down, and how he made terms with those who held them, no one knows.

Thus would the Holy Alliance have been already decimated, if Canning had not before virtually dispersed the assembly. Soon after the arch enemy, Napoleon, was in his grave, Londonderry followed, and carried with him the fate of the compact. Now, five of the sovereigns had slipped away; and a plebeian man had arisen who was too strong for all that were gone and all that remained. Here, then, we may drop all mention of the Holy Alliance.

AFFAIRS OF
GREECE.

It has been related that when the Verona Congress was summoned, the business proposed for its consideration was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. As it turned out, the subject of Greece was scarcely mentioned at that Congress, which was occupied with the then secret topic of the French intentions towards Spain. The British Minister's mind, however, was not the less open to Greek interests. In his youth he had written a poem on Greece—a lament on its slavery; and when the extensive Greek insurrection in 1821 seemed to open a prospect of liberty, no heart beat higher with hope and sympathy than his. He was, like a multitude of others, sanguine about the ability, physical and moral, of the Greeks to accomplish and maintain their independence. His duty as a Minister, however, had to be considered before his predilections as a man. He adhered firmly to the principles on which he conducted his government in other cases. He preserved peace on the Continent by strict neutrality in regard to the war in Eastern Europe; he enforced this neutrality by restraining individuals from rushing to Greece, to fight against Turkey: while he used all the power of his position to influence Turkey favourably, and to soften the horrors of the war. His countenance was on the side of liberty; and he was already pondering a scheme, which he

BRITISH POLICY.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 370.

carried out in a subsequent year, for the protection of Greece against the destructive violence of her foe, while yet strictly enforcing his policy of non-interference with any affairs of other states in which Great Britain was not, as a state, involved. Turkey had the same claim to the possession of Greece that any other state has to its conquered dependencies: and however the sympathy of the enlightened world might be with the insurgent Greeks, no government had a right to interfere with the possessions of Turkey. Every assistance but political aid was, however, freely offered throughout Europe. Kings and people subscribed money for the redemption of Greek captives, and the support of Greek outcasts: and, in spite of all prohibitions of governments, many volunteers from France, England, Italy, and Germany went to fight under the Greek leaders. Our own Byron perished in the cause—laid low by fatigue and fever before Missolonghi. The accomplished and beloved Santa Rosa, who had failed in the struggle to free his own Piedmont from Austrian rule, gave his efforts, and presently his life, to the Greek cause. At that time, the cause appeared desperate: and its misfortunes were cruelly aggravated by the disappointment of hopes held out from England of supplies of money and steam boats. Perhaps the less said the better of the Greek loan negotiated in London in 1825, except that such incidents ought to yield their full lesson to future times, when similar occasions may occur. We are disposed to believe that the business was originally undertaken with a true heartiness in the Greek cause—with an enthusiasm which carried some parties beyond their calculations, and a due consideration of their means: and this kind of inconsiderateness is too likely to induce a reaction of selfish care, under which the pretension of benevolence and a love of liberty becomes a mockery. Thus it was in the matter of the Greek loan in London, which yielded even less of credit to the managing parties in England than of money to the Greeks. Amidst the flow and ebb of sentiment and action among private parties in England, the government steadily held its position of neutrality, giving its endeavours in aid of humanity, and its undisguised good wishes to the Greek insurgents.

It has been told how complete was the humiliation of Algiers in 1816, and how a thousand and eighty Christian slaves rushed from the interior to the shore, and from the shore into the boats, escaping from what they called "a second hell," to the British ships which were to carry them home. The victory appeared complete: but victors never know when they have done with such an enemy as the piratical state of Algiers then was. Another quarrel arose in January 1824. Captain Spencer was sent with two British vessels to arrange a dispute between the Dey of Algiers and the English consul, Mr. Macdonald. On his arrival, Captain Spencer found two Spanish vessels in the Mole, recently captured, whose crews were made slaves of. Of course, the liberty of these Spaniards was demanded, under the treaty made with Lord Exmouth. No answer arriving in four days, Captain Spencer began to fear for the safety of the Europeans on shore: and, under a pretext of giving them an entertainment, he got them all on board one of his ships, while the other engaged the piratical vessel which had captured the Spaniards, took it, and set free seventeen Spaniards who were found on board. War against Algiers was declared; and a squadron under Sir H. Neale's command appeared before the town on the 24th of July. While waiting for a wind, the British commander received

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EUROPEAN SYM-
PATHY.Annual Register,
1826, p. 368.Report on Greek
Loan. Annual
Register, 1826,
pp. 374, 375.LAST WAR WITH
ALGIERS.
Ante. Book i.
chap. 6.Annual Register,
1824, p. 207.

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a message from the Dey requesting negotiation. The negotiations gave little trouble, for the Dey was submissive. He engaged that no more European prisoners of war should be made slaves of, but that they should be treated with all humanity, and regarded as prisoners of war as in Europe. Here Great Britain closed accounts with Algiers, as it presently ceased to exist as an African state. A dispute arising between the Algerine government and the French in 1827, France sent forth a power which conquered Algiers, and in 1830 made it a French colony.

ASHANTEE WAR.

Penny Cyclopædia,
art. Ashantees.

Annual Register,
1824, chapter ix.

While Algiers was thus called to account, a little war was proceeding on another part of the African coast, which brought nothing but disaster and shame to the British engaged in it. Since the beginning of the century, the Ashantee nation had been rising in importance by conquest. The successive British Governors of Cape Coast Castle had not preserved a steady course of policy with the Ashantees and Fantees: they had changed sides, and broken faith; and now the settlement was to receive the natural retribution. These governors had been appointed by the African Company, whose settlements were all assumed by the British government in 1821. In 1822, Sir Charles M'Carthy was sent out as Governor-in-Chief of all the settlements which had belonged to the Company: and he presently found that he had the Company's Ashantee war upon his hands. He seems to have been wholly unskilled in African warfare. The narrative of the events of 1824 is a dismal story of mistakes and misadventures: of reliance on native auxiliaries who failed in every possible way on all occasions; of inability to cross rivers, and entanglements in the bush; of messengers not knowing their way; deluges of rain being encountered; and of ammunition falling short, far from home. Sir Charles M'Carthy, after receiving a warning that his skin (or his skull, for both are reported,) should adorn the great war drum of Ashantee, actually divided his troops into four portions, and permitted the small force which he had conducted into the interior to be surrounded by ten thousand Ashantees. He was wounded in the breast by a musket-shot, and three of his officers laid him under a tree, where the enemy rushed, knife in hand, on the little party. By the intervention of a chief, one of the Englishmen, named Williams, was saved, after being wounded in the neck: and on turning round, the first thing he saw was the headless bodies of his three companions. All the English officers who accompanied Sir C. M'Carthy were killed or captured, except two. This happened on the 21st of January, 1824. It was not till May that the British found themselves strong enough to brave the enemy in the field. The forts being garrisoned by seamen and marines, just arrived with the new Governor, Colonel Sutherland, and the garrisons turned out to take the field, Colonel Chisholm attacked the Ashantees, on the 21st, and drove them before him, after five hours' hard fighting. The advantage could not be followed up, for want of resources, and because the native allies deserted. Much fighting occurred between this time and the 11th of July, when the Ashantees were again defeated in the field, near Cape Coast Castle. They hovered about till the 20th, after which they were not seen again. Mutiny and desertion in his own army disabled the Ashantee king from harassing the British, as he might still have done by his very numerous forces. He retired, leaving behind him bare and bloody fields, where he had advanced among rich crops of maize,

bananas, yams, and plantains. At this time, beef was sixteen guineas a tierce at Cape Coast; and it was scarcely possible to obtain flour or bread at any price. The poor natives had, of course, no prospect but of dying by hunger.

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The Ashantee King did not give up his object of possessing himself of all the country which lay between his northern boundary and the sea. During the two succeeding years, he made vast preparations, in great quietness. The natives in alliance with England were much alarmed, and applied for assistance to Colonel Purdon, commanding at Cape Coast. They solemnly promised not to run away again, if they were assisted and led by the British: and this time, one king and his forces were firm, and fought well. The final engagement took place on the 7th of August 1826, when the Ashantees lost, it was believed, not less than five thousand men. On the British side, the loss was eight hundred: and two thousand were wounded. The Ashantee King lost the golden umbrella of state, the golden stool of state, and much wealth of gold-dust, ivory, &c. The great Talisman of the Ashantees was taken also, and examined. Under the external covering of leopard skin, appeared a silk handkerchief; and within the handkerchief were two folds of paper, covered with Arabic characters: and within the paper, was the head of Sir C. M'Carthy. One of the native kings was the captor of the talisman; and he refused to give it up.—Humbling as it is to be worsted in these barbaric wars, and indeed to be engaged in them at all, their occurrence and incidents cannot be passed over in the history of the time. They are not only facts of the time; but they yield their lesson. Such wars occur in most cases, as in the present, from the lack of steadiness, ability, or knowledge, in the agents sent from home: and we shall be liable to such wars and such humiliations as long as due care is not taken to send fit and properly prepared agents to our meanest settlements in the most remote nooks of the world, as anxiously as to the most brilliant court in Europe. The bad faith of Governor Smith in 1819 led to the slaughter of Sir C. M'Carthy in 1824: and the incapacity of Sir C. M'Carthy in 1824 caused the protraction of the war for two years, the difficulty of putting down the Ashantees at the end of that time, and all the horrors of famine which afflicted the territory during the intermediate period.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 233.

For nearly four years prior to 1826, there had been war between the British in India and the King of Ava, who ruled over the Burmese empire. The Burmese territory is above a thousand miles long, by six hundred broad: and it lies between Bengal and China, filling up the whole space. The King was as proud and as vain as barbaric sovereigns usually are when they know little or nothing beyond the bounds of their own territory; and he ventured to annoy his western neighbour, unaware of the chastisement that he must submit to in consequence. The Burmese pushed across the frontier and committed thefts and violence, from time to time, for some years before the war; but these aggressions need not be supposed to be countenanced by the government; and they were not therefore made a subject of formal complaint. In 1823, however, the government picked a quarrel, slew some soldiers in the British service, imprisoned some British subjects: and on being called to account, talked of invading Bengal. The Burmese actually entered the British territory, and set up forts, secured with strong palisades, from one of which a British officer and his force were driven back with considerable loss, in the month of February. After

BURMESE WAR.

Annual Register,
1824, p. 114.

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this, war followed of course: and of course it was a disastrous war enough to the ignorant sovereign who had provoked it.

The principal seaport of the Burmese, Rangoon, was attacked on the 11th of May, and immediately submitted. The members of the government fled at the first shot; and the whole population of Rangoon, except one hundred persons, ran away into the jungle before the British could take possession of the town. After this, however, the conduct of the war became much more difficult, from the security afforded to the enemy by the jungle, and by the stockades which the Burmese threw up before every advantageous spot where they rested. It was a weary and dreary war; as war with a barbaric people must ever be. It was no comfort that the Burmese lost, many times over more men than the British; that they were always leaving their ammunition behind them, and laying waste their fields, that their enemy might not be supported by their soil. There was no comfort in all this; for it did not appear to hasten the arrival of peace. The climate and the country,—the heavy rains, burning suns, jungles, and swamps, were unfavourable to the invaders; and at the end of 1824, though they had advanced deep into the country, they did not seem much nearer to peace. The year 1825 too was filled up with successes which went for nothing,—though the British commander, Sir Archibald Campbell, did his duty well. One-eighth of the British troops were sick amidst the swamps and rains; and they were fired upon from the jungle where they could not follow their assailants. In the autumn, there was an armistice, with abundance of fine speeches and compliments, ceremonious dinings, and pretences of ardent friendship: but probably every one knew that the whole was a device for obtaining time,—to recover the sick of the one party, and replenish the means of defence of the other. Then followed the defeat of the great Burmese army by little more than a tenth part of their number: and then a treaty of peace which, after being duly signed, was found actually never to have been forwarded to the king. The alleged difficulty about this treaty, on the part of the Burmese, was that they could not pay the money demanded for the expenses of the war. They begged Sir A. Campbell to take rice instead, or to cut down and carry away the fine trees he might take a fancy to: but he insisted on the money, and the treaty was signed. When, after the next victory, the British took possession of Melloone, they found there the treaty, which had never been forwarded to Ava. And they found also, in the Prince Memiaboo's house, the sum of 30,000 rupees (£3,000). The treaty was forwarded to the Commissioner, with a note saying that he had probably left it behind him in the hurry of his departure. The Commissioner replied that in the same hurry he had left behind him a large sum of money which he was confident the British general was only waiting a favourable opportunity to restore to him.

There is something extremely painful in such stories as these; in contemplating wars whose horrors are as great as those which are conducted by foes under an equality of civilization, but which are yet made ludicrous by the childishness of one of the parties. Such wars do not appear, as far as our Eastern possessions are concerned, to have been the fault of the more civilized party, any time within our century. There is no wish for war in a case like this, where the cost of money can hardly be repaid by any fruits of conquest;

Annual Register,
1825; Chap. 8th.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 211.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 215.

where the troops are cut off by climate and disease; where the survivors gain little glory by much hardship; and where the sufferings of the conquered country are such as must give concern to the hardest heart. In the present instance, all means of conciliation and negotiation seem to have been tried before war was resorted to. The necessity was one to which future generations are subjected by those who first establish a footing by force in a barbaric quarter of the globe. Such men little know what they do—to what an interminable series of future wars they pledge their country; what an embarrassment of territory, and burden of responsibility, and crowds of quarrelsome and irrational neighbours, they bring upon her; and how they implicate her in the obligation to superintend the fortunes of half a continent—or perhaps half the globe, till civilization shall have so spread and penetrated as that the nations can take care of themselves, and co-operate with each other. It is thus with the British in Asia now. After the close of this Burmese war, a wise and benevolent statesman was wont to say in London, with a grave countenance, that we should be compelled to conquer China: and those who did not see as far as he did into our responsibilities on the field of Asia, and who knew how far he was from desiring conquest as a good, used to jest about him as “the Conqueror of China.” Before the day of the Chinese war arrived, the far-seeing statesman was in his grave; but his words remained in the ears of his friends, as a direction into the yet remoter future where our national responsibilities will still be acting when we are in our graves. Ours is, probably, not the only generation which will pass away before England’s wars with barbaric states are ended.

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Peace was concluded with the King of Ava, in February, on terms which were triumphant to the British. Their expenses were paid by the Burmese, and there was such a cession of border territory as would secure Bengal from incursions from the east. There was difficulty and delay about the restoration of the prisoners and the payment of the tribute; but every condition was enforced by Sir A. Campbell, and, on the 5th of March, the British troops turned their faces towards Rangoon, on their way back to Bengal.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 217.

While these eastern conflicts were taking place, Mr. Canning was earnestly occupied at home in preventing a war in the western world. Till our globe is better known, and newly-discovered portions more accurately surveyed and defined than has been possible in the early days of geographical science, there will be danger of disputes about possession and boundaries between countries which have contributed to the discovery of new regions, and which may have been concerned in cessions of territory obscurely described. This has been the case with regard to the territory pertaining to one of the most important rivers in the New World—the Columbia; the possession of which has been repeatedly and vehemently disputed by the English Government and that of the United States. When Mr. Canning came into office in 1822, the condition of the question was such that, as Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Rush (the American Minister in London), war could be produced by holding up a finger.

OREGON.

The matter was really a very important one. The Columbia is the largest river which flows into the Pacific; its course from the Rocky Mountains being

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nearly nine hundred miles. Its entrance is somewhat difficult; but just within is a spacious and secure bay. The harbours along the west coast of North America are very few; not more than two or three outside the disputed territory: and far-seeing men are aware that every secure anchorage will be of inestimable value when the trade of the Pacific becomes what it is certainly destined to be. Again; the Columbia is now the only large river amidst the habitable regions of the globe which remains to be colonized: and of all possible considerations, none is so important to Great Britain as her field of colonization. Embayed in the coast of the disputed territory is an island—Vancouver's Island—two hundred and fifty miles long by fifty broad, which is fertile, has a climate like that of England, and abounds in coal of an excellent quality. In Mr. Canning's time, the importance of this island was not so clear as it is now that we have obtained settlements in China, and extended our steam navigation into the Pacific. The prospect was not then so distinct as now, of the activity of commerce which must arise in those regions where our agents are already looking for coal and good harbours. At that time, the Oregon was a remote region beyond the Rocky Mountains, which it seemed scarcely possible for emigrants to reach, and whence there could hardly be any communication between them and the mother country. Now that it is accessible from the other side, being only eighteen days' sail from our Chinese settlements, while commerce and navigation are quickening along the whole American coast, the aspect of the question is much altered. But even then, the Oregon territory was seen to be no trifle, to be lightly given up by an insular nation, whose future welfare must depend incalculably on its means of colonization; and the question of the right to Oregon was disputed with a proportionate warmth and pertinacity.

The claim of the United States was for a boundary which should give them not only the Columbia river, but Vancouver's Island, bringing their coast so nearly to a junction with the Russian territory, as that British vessels could pass in and out only among islands belonging to the one or the other power. In 1818, the British Commissioners, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Goulburn, would not concede this; and the American government would not modify the claim: and the parties, therefore, made an arrangement which could not but increase the difficulty of a future settlement. They agreed to leave the territory open to occupation by Americans and British for ten years; after which the subject should be resumed. As time drew on to the close of the term, Mr. Rush, the American Minister, was directed to open the subject again with Mr. Canning; the United States government having, meantime, sent a frigate to the mouth of the Columbia, to explore the river, and establish a post at its mouth, on what Congress declared to be "within the acknowledged limits" of the American territory. Mr. Rush waited on Mr. Canning, who was in bed with an attack of gout. Mr. Rush was admitted: they spread out maps upon the bed; and Mr. Canning was astonished to discover how great was the extent of the American claim. The next time they conferred, the American Minister yielded two degrees of latitude, which would have left Vancouver's Island to Britain, but not the Columbia river. This offer was rejected by Mr. Canning, whose proposal of a modified settlement was in turn rejected by Mr. Rush. The more the affair was discussed, the more hopeless

President's Message, 1824.

Life of Canning, p. 337.

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did any conclusion appear: and so angry did the people of both countries become, that the slightest irritability on the part of the negotiators would have instantly kindled a war. Mr. Canning's part was patience, and the recommendation of patience. He lost no opportunity of testifying his good will towards the government and people of the United States, and of restraining the jealousy between the two nations. The question was not settled in his time; but he did much in preventing a war, and in keeping open a way for an ultimate amicable settlement of a question whose importance to his country was greater than even he could be aware of.

Whenever the periods arrived—once in two years—for the renewal of the ALIEN ACT. Alien Act, the question was asked in parliament by the opponents of the bill, whether it was proposed for the benefit of our own country, or for that of foreign sovereigns. The subject is sufficiently connected with our foreign policy to find its place here: and especially because it was the prevalence of discontent and insurrection abroad, during this period, which made the seasons of the renewal of the Alien Act interesting and important occasions of discussion.

Every one who has travelled on the Continent is ready to join in complaint and condemnation of the passport system there, by which every traveller is compelled to carry about with him a description of himself—his personal appearance, age, station, and occupation; and to have the statement certified afresh for every new country he enters. The trouble and expense, the vexation and delay, the mistakes and inconveniences, suffered by travellers under this system, are such as to make it hateful to everybody. No such system existing in England, it is clear that, during troubled times, every man who had reason to wish to escape notice in any continental country would rush to England, if he could, and there feel himself in safe hiding, if no method of registration of foreigners were adopted. Among these, the great majority might be such as, from their worth or their misfortunes, England would be proud and eager to receive and console; and such could have no reasonable objection to register their names and description on their arrival. Others, however, whether many or few, might be criminals or mischief-makers, of whose presence in the country it is absolutely necessary to the public security and good faith that the government should be aware. This much appears to have been undisputed, while the successive Alien Acts of 1820, 1822, and 1824, were under discussion in parliament. The provisions by which foreigners arriving in England were required to declare who and what they were, and to sign their names in the presence of an authority always on the spot, were not objected to by those who strenuously opposed other parts of the bills. By this registration it appears that in 1820 the number of foreigners in England was no less than 25,000, very few of whom were engaged in commercial or other settled pursuits; a fact which seems to indicate the recent arrival of a large proportion of them. There was a constant increase of arrivals over departures, from an average of 266, to 1,300 in a year, from 1819 to 1822, both inclusive. This extraordinary influx was, of course, owing to the revolutions and revolts on the Continent: and the class of immigrants was exactly that which a Castlereagh and Sidmouth would watch with jealousy and

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dislike, and which would appeal strongly to the sympathies of the Liberal leaders in parliament, and of the hospitable English people throughout the land. The objections made to the successive Alien Acts, and urged with force and ardour by some of the best men in parliament, regarded the power accorded to Government of sending away obnoxious strangers, and its possible retrospective operation. The Acts secured to the suspected alien a power of appeal to the Privy Council: and he was to be dismissed openly, by proclamation, or by an Order in Council. The opponents of the bills required some security that the obnoxious foreigner should not be delivered up to his special enemies abroad, nor subjected on the spot to threats from subordinate officers: and they demanded that all foreigners resident in Great Britain before 1814, should be exempted from the operation of the Acts. Their speeches were directed against the power of dismissal at all; though the necessity of some such power was not expressly denied. The replies showed that the Government was under some effectual responsibility, and that the existence of the power of deportation was the surest way of rendering the exercise of that power unnecessary. The actual case seems to be that the power *was* unacceptable to the holders, even more than to the givers, who could not control its operation; that it was used as sparingly, and surrendered as early as possible; and that it is most improbable that it should ever be conferred again. The bills passed by decided majorities on each occasion; and on each occasion, the Minister had to report that there had been no abuse of the powers of the Acts, and that the number of aliens sent away was so small as to appear to testify to the efficacy of the legislation. In ten years, as Mr. Peel declared in 1824, only five or six persons had been sent out of the country, except a little band of agitators connected with Napoleon; and with regard to these cases, there was no dangerous or tyrannical concealment. In short, the Acts, though in a certain measure questionable, worked well in an extraordinary time; and in 1824, Mr. Peel proposed a considerable amelioration in the provisions of the renewed Act. At this time, the number of Aliens in the country was 26,500; and some had been detected in devising plots for revolt in their respective countries, amidst the facilities afforded by a residence in London. The Government had, however, sent away only one person (Count Bettera) within two years, preferring to stop the plots of agitators by warning and remonstrance; and they now felt able to recommend that the Alien Act should henceforth apply to no persons who had resided in England for seven years. On the next occasion, in 1826, a much greater relaxation was made—the power of deportation was withdrawn from among the provisions, a fuller process of registration being substituted for it.

Great satisfaction was occasioned by this change. No one objected to the reasonableness of the demand that Government should know where the foreigners who sought an abode in the country would be found; all agreed that the power of deportation had been carefully used, and guarded from abuse; and all were heartily glad when it could be given up, never, it was hoped, to be asked for again.

During this course of years, these thousands of foreigners largely influenced the mind of the English nation. It was a good thing to have among us men

of great and various knowledge, art, and accomplishment. It was a good thing to have our minds, too long and too closely shut up in our own island and our own affairs, opened to take in new ideas, and awakened to a fresh curiosity. It was a good thing to have our sympathies appealed to, and our hospitable impulses strengthened, by the claims of so many perplexed and distressed strangers, who looked to us as their only refuge from despair. It was a better thing still to have the subject of government and constitutional liberties discussed at so many English firesides; so many careless minds fixed—so many timid inspired—so many ardent informed; and all, perhaps, made more aware than they could have been by any other means of the privileges of their own political position, and their duty in the preservation and improvement of it. If, in the next generation, England makes progress in constitutional freedom and social amelioration, it may be surmised that among the reformers and guardians of the national welfare are some whose eyes flashed, and whose hearts beat, when they sat on parents' knees, listening to the foreign speech, and sympathising in the fortunes of the exiled noble, and the indomitable patriot, of whom his own country was not worthy. Among the blessings of the Peace may be reckoned such fraternization as this.

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CHAPTER VI.

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CHANGES IN THE
MINISTRY.

IN looking back to the time of Mr. Canning's entrance upon office, in the autumn of 1822, it is clear—made clear by the light of subsequent events—that a new period in the domestic history of the country was opening. Many persons must have been aware of this at the time, if we may judge by the satisfaction expressed in various ways at the appointment of Mr. Robinson as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the place of Mr. Vansittart, who left office with the title of Lord Bexley; and at Mr. Huskisson's becoming President of the Board of Trade, in January, 1823. Enough of the old elements was left to keep the timid and unobservant quiet, in the hope that things would go on pretty much as before, while Lord Liverpool was the head of the administration, and Lord Eldon was a fixture; and the Duke of Wellington represented England abroad, and the King was surrounded by so many of his favourite class of statesmen; and the Duke of York took a solemn oath occasionally against countenancing any attempt to relax the disabilities of the Catholics. It was a misfortune, to be sure, that the government of the country could not go on without Canning; without a man who was irretrievably pledged to the cause of Catholic Emancipation: and that Mr. Huskisson was admitted into the Cabinet, with his troublesome and dangerous notions about impairing the protection to native industry; but it was hoped that native industry was safe in the fostering bosom of the English nation; and some expressions of Mr. Canning's were laid hold of—expressions about the apparent impossibility of carrying Catholic Emancipation under any government that could be devised—as affording an assurance that, though the new minister was obliged to talk about the matter, he would never be able to do anything in it; and thus the tedium and loss of time in talking would be the extent of the evil. Besides, the two obnoxious men were “political adventurers,” low-born, and therefore vulgar; and their influence would be kept down accordingly by their more aristocratic political connections. Such appears to have been the view of the Ministerial party, at this time, throughout the country, from the King himself to the little country shopkeeper of Tory politics. The light of subsequent events shows us, however, that the case did not stand exactly thus. The King was growing morbid in temper and spirits—more addicted to a selfish and inglorious seclusion, and less interested about public affairs from year to year. The Duke of York was to die before him, and now in no long time. The Lord Chancellor was to find himself less influential, henceforth, in the Cabinet and in the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington was to prove himself as pliable before political necessity as inflexible in military duty. Mr. Peel was to prove himself capable of education in the politics and philosophy of a new period. And Lord

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Liverpool himself was already so uneasy about the position of the Catholics that he did not, and could not, conceal from his intimate friends his conviction that their emancipation was only a question of time. He was now within five years of the date when, as is well known, he was making up his mind to resign his post to another who would carry the emancipation of the Catholics; which purpose was intercepted by the fatal seizure which withdrew him from public life.

As for the two "political adventurers" whom it was so disagreeable to be obliged to admit into the Cabinet, their present position was enough to mark, to the observant thinker, the change in the times. A new period must be opening when men of a new order are so indispensable at the Council Board of the empire as that they are found seated there without effort of their own, and against the will of their colleagues. A new period was opening. Let us look at some of its features.

A time of war is a season of abeyance of social principles. Amidst the disturbance of war, the great natural laws of society are obscured and temporarily lost. An exceptional state is introduced, during which the principles of social rule retire and hide themselves behind the passions and exigencies of the time. During such a season, the statesmen required are such as can employ, as substitutes for large principles of social rule, a strong and disinterested will, commanding a clear understanding and a ready apprehension. In such a season, the man is everything. He truly rules, if he has the requisite power of will, whether his aims and his methods be better or worse. Statesmanship is a post which in war, as in a despotism, may well make giddy all but the strongest heads—may relax any nerves but those turned to steel by the fire of an unquenchable will. A statesman in such times is required above all things to be consistent. Consistency—which then means an adherence to an avowed plan or system—is the one indispensable virtue of a statesman who rules during an obscuration of great social laws. There is no reason for vacillation or change when he acts from internal forces, and not under the direction of external laws conflicting with faculty put to a new school. While statesmanship was of this character—as long as the British nation lived under rule which had more or less of despotism in it, and while it was engaged in war—(that is, during almost the whole of its existence)—British statesmen were naturally, almost necessarily, of the aristocratic class. Leaving behind, out of notice, the administrators who were mere creatures of royal favour, and not worthy to be called statesmen, and coming down to later times, when political function had become a personal honour independently of royal grace, it was inevitable that English statesmen should be derived from a class to whom personal honours were most an object, and whose circumstances of birth and fortune set them at liberty for political action and occupation. Many influences favoured this choice of statesmen from the aristocratic orders: class habits of intercourse—class views and class interests. A lawyer's birth is forgotten in his eminence; so that low-born lawyers might rise, by the bar, to high political office: but otherwise a man must be, if not in some way noble, highly aristocratic before he could be a statesman, under penalty of being called a "political adventurer." After the peace, a different set of conditions gradually developed themselves. When war is over—the critical period which

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admits the rule of the statesman's will)—an organic state succeeds, wherein all individual will succumbs to the working of general laws. The statesman can then no longer be a political hero, overruling influences and commanding events. He only can be a statesman in the new days who is the servant of principles—the agent of the great natural laws of society. The principles which had gone into hiding during the period of warfare, now show themselves again, and assume, amidst more or less resistance, the government of states. Administrators who will not obey must retire, and make way for a new order of men. Amidst the difficulty and perplexity of such changes, a whole nation may be heard calling out for a great political hero, and complaining that all its statesmen have grown small and feeble: but it is not that the men have deteriorated, but that the policy has grown visibly organic; and a different order of men is required to administer its affairs.

When these new men come in, the old requisitions are still made—the old tests applied: and great is the consequent turmoil and disappointment on all hands. Everybody is troubled, except a philosopher here and there, who sees further than others. Consistency is talked of still, as the first virtue requisite in a statesman; and perhaps the man himself considers it so, and pledges himself fearlessly to consistency. But he soon finds himself no master of the principles of government, but a mere agent of laws which work themselves out whether he will or no; a mere learner under the tutelage of time and events. If he is a statesman from ambition, he must change the ground of his ambition; not exulting in framing and carrying out a political theory or system, but investing his pride in the enterprise of carrying out in the safest manner changes which must be made; doing in the best manner work which must, in one way or other, be done. As this new necessity opens before him—this fresh view of statesmanship presses upon him—he suffers more perhaps than all whom he disappoints. He is in an agony for his consistency, till he has become fully convinced that the highest praise of a statesman under the new order of things is, that he can live and learn: and long after he has himself obtained a clear view of this truth, he is annoyed by inquiries after his lost consistency. A little time, however, justifies him. On looking round, he finds that there is no politician of worth in any party, who has not changed his opinion on one or more questions of importance since entering upon political life: and that the only “consistent” men—the only men who think and say precisely what they thought and said at the beginning—are the political bigots who cannot live and learn.

Under a new period like this, new men must come up,—men who discern the signs of the times earlier and more clearly than politicians who are closed in by class limits and governmental traditions. Such new men would hardly escape criticism from their colleagues, even if belonging to the order from which statesmen are usually derived. Their being brought in as a sign of new times is a ground for jealousy in itself. But the new men must, from the very nature of the case, be from a class placed in a different position: and they have much to encounter. If wealthy, so as to be, in regard to fortune, independent of office, they are looked upon as upstarts. If without fortune, they are called adventurers. No matter how great their genius, how conspicuous their honesty, how unquestionable their disinterestedness, or even how,

aristocratic their tendencies;—if they live on the proceeds of office, and make statesmanship the business of their lives, they are “adventurers.”

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All the varieties referred to were found in the Cabinet of 1823. There were some members of old and high families. There were some of middle class origin who had risen by means of university connection and high Toryism, at a time when the war made a wider road to statesmanship than the natural laws of society permit in seasons of peace. Lord Eldon was of what his colleagues would have called low origin, if they had cared about it: but he had risen by the way of the law, and was exempt from criticism on that score. Mr. Peel was the son of a cotton-spinner: but his father, besides MR. PEELE. being enormously rich, was a vigorous Tory: and the son was quiet and modest, submitting to be commended patronizingly by Lord Sidmouth, and never forgetting or concealing the fact of his origin. There can be no doubt that, though Mr. Peel has managed the fact with all prudence and honesty, and has long risen above the need of any adventitious advantages, he has felt the awkwardness of being the son of a cotton-spinner innumerable times in the course of his career. There is something in the way of his occasionally referring to the fact which shows this. It is painful to dwell on these features of the lot of statesmanship;—almost shocking when we consider how far the honours of the position transcend any honours of birth. But it is necessary to historical truth to mark clearly the features of a new period of society: and this period seems to be the one when the hold of the aristocratic classes on the function of statesmanship was first loosened;—the first opening made into the prospect of a future time when men of the people will be admitted, and must be welcomed, to a share in the management of the affairs of the whole people. The first who entered the Government under this incipient change were sure to suffer; and to suffer on a point on which men of their kind are peculiarly sensitive. The men who had thus to suffer were Canning MR. CANNING AND MR. HUSKISSON, and Huskisson.

Canning was one of whom it might be said, according to ordinary notions, that he ought to have been a nobleman. High-spirited, confident, gay, genial, chivalrous, and most accomplished,—he had the attributes of nobility, as they are commonly conceived of: and a nobleman he was,—for he had genius. He held high rank in Nature's peerage. But this was not distinction enough in the eyes of some of his colleagues, and the majority of their party. His father had been poor, though of gentlemanly birth; and after his father's death, his mother had become an actress. Not only was there an abiding sense of these facts in the minds of his colleagues, his party, and his opponents; but some spread a rumour, which met him from time to time in his life, that his birth was illegitimate. The same was said in the case of Mr. Huskisson: and in both cases it was false.

Mr. Huskisson was the son of a gentleman of restricted fortune, who possessed a small estate in Staffordshire. The greater part of the property was entailed upon him; and he might have led the life of a country gentleman, if his talents and inclinations had not led him into another walk in life. As it was, he became private secretary to Lord Gower, the British Ambassador at Paris, in 1790, when he was only twenty years of age. Not long afterwards, he was requested by Mr. Dundas, in the name of the Cabinet, to accept the

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office of administering the Alien Bill,—his knowledge of foreign languages and customs, and his gentlemanly manners, fitting him to conduct in the best mode the affairs of the emigrants landing at our ports. The Staffordshire estate descending to him about this time, considerably burdened with charges on account of the younger members of the family, he chose his way of life, declined that of a country gentleman, cut off the entail, and devoted himself to the public service. In his twenty-sixth year he became Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, under Mr. Dundas.

As for Mr. Canning, he was descended from an ancient family of gentry, one branch of which,—that from which the statesman was descended,—went to Ireland two centuries before his time, to live on lands presented to them by James I. Mr. Canning's father was called to the bar, but he never practised. Literature beguiled him from the pursuit of law; and he died early. Under the pressure of debt, he had consented to cut off the entail of the Irish estate, which he soon saw settled on his younger brother. He married a beautiful young lady of eighteen, of good family,—Miss Costello; and their son, the statesman, was born on the 11th of April, 1770, when the friend and colleague of his after years, Mr. Huskisson, was exactly a month old. The father was wretched at the thought of having made his son landless; his cares had long preyed upon his health; and he died on his child's first birthday, leaving the young widow wholly destitute: and it was then that, seeing no other resource for a maintenance, she went upon the stage. It is not going aside from our purposes to relate these particulars of family history. The cry against the origin of Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson was so vehement, and so earnestly echoed by the people themselves, when given out by the aristocracy, that there is clearly some strong significance in it, which makes it a sign of the times. The aristocracy ought not to have complained of the birth of either of these men: and the people ought not to have been discontented at the spectacle of men without hereditary fortune devoting themselves to the public service, while complaining of the influence of hereditary fortune in unfitting politicians for popular sympathy. What the people ought to have felt under such an incident of government, Mr. Canning indicated in one of his Liverpool speeches, after his election in 1816; a speech for which certain aristocratic families never forgave him, and for which they made his sensitive spirit suffer to his latest day. "There is," said Mr. Canning to his Liverpool constituents, "yet a heavier charge than either of those that I have stated to you. It is, gentlemen, that I am an adventurer. To this charge, as I understand it, I am willing to plead guilty. A representative of the people, I am one of the people: and I present myself to those who choose me only with the claims of character (be they what they may) unaccredited by patrician patronage, or party recommendation. Nor is it in this free country, where, in every walk of life, the road of honourable success is open to every individual,—I am sure it is not in this place, that I shall be expected to apologize for so presenting myself to your choice. I know there is a political creed which assigns to a certain combination of great families a right to dictate to the sovereign, and to influence the people; and that this doctrine of hereditary aptitude for administration is, singularly enough, most prevalent among those who find nothing more laughable than the principle of legitimacy in the Crown.—To

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this theory I have never subscribed. If to depend directly upon the people, as their representative in Parliament; if, as a servant of the Crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence,—if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge: and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations.”

It is easy to see why, after this avowal, his aristocratic comrades and foes dwelt much on what they called “the lowness of his origin.” The question is, why so many of the people were for ever taunting him with it and with being an adventurer.—It was not only, in this case, from that strong infusion of the aristocratic spirit into the English character which makes the town footman, the country shopkeeper, and the labourer in the hamlet, value the claims of birth as highly as any nobleman in the peerage. Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson were too well born to be subject to popular scorn on this ground. It was because they were not, till latterly, on the popular side. Men of the people, their tendencies were aristocratic; and they were seen in company, and supposed in league, with the Eldons and the Wellingtons,—with the comrades of Sidmouth and Castlereagh. As time passed on, and disclosed the great truth that a new period had begun, the jealousy and dislike of the aristocratic observers of these two men became aggravated,—mixed up as it was with fear of change: and, from the same cause, their footing with the nation improved; till the popular confidence in the case of Huskisson reached the point of calm trust and gratitude for eminent services; and in the case of Canning, a pitch of high enthusiasm which caused the news of his death to be received with an universal groan.

What dismay the introduction of the new men caused among the old is shown, with a sort of ludicrous pathos, in the correspondence of the Lord Chancellor at this time. He was always talking of retiring, on account of the disgrace the Government was incurring by its advancing liberalism. At every new step taken, he threatened to retire: but he did not do it. He opposed, and groaned over every proposition made by his colleagues: and it seems as if even the Premier, his old friend, had grown tired of consulting him; and especially about the appointment of men whose measures and conduct he would be sure to disapprove as they developed themselves. The behaviour seems cavalier; but it must really have been difficult to know what to do with a man who would neither act heartily with his colleagues nor leave them. “The ‘Courier’ of last night,” writes the Lord Chancellor to his brother, “announces Mr. Huskisson’s introduction into the Cabinet—of the intention or the fact I have no other communication. Whether Lord Sidmouth has or not, I don’t know: but really this is rather too much. Looking at the whole history of this gentleman, I don’t consider this introduction, without a word said about the intention, as I should perhaps have done with respect to some persons that have been, or might be, brought into the cabinet; but turning out one man, and introducing another in the way all this is done, is telling the Chancellor that he should not give them the trouble of disposing of him, but should (not treated as a Chancellor) cease to be a Chancellor. What makes it worse is, that the great man of all has a hundred times most solemnly declared that no connection of a certain person’s should come in.” (Lord

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. p. 468.

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Liverpool had declared that no friend of Canning's should come in.) "There is no believing one word anybody says — and what makes the matter still worse is, that everybody acquiesces most quietly, and waits in all humility and patience, till their own turn comes." It is plain that the world was rolling past the steadfast old Chancellor, and carrying everybody with it but himself. The wind that it made chilled him as it swept by; and he was troubled at the void that it left about him. He called out, sometimes angrily and sometimes piteously, to the world, to come back and stand where it did before: but the world was fairly on its way now, and could not stop to listen to him: so the old man had to cheer himself with the comforts of his conscience; — that most comfortable conscience which never gave him any trouble, but always so much solace! Perhaps this conscience of his would have stirred so far as to make him retire if he could, amidst his many prophesyings, have foreseen how soon it would be said of the man now in question, "of Mr. Huskisson, in particular, against whom every species of ribald abuse has been cast, we have no hesitation in saying, that he has done more to improve our commercial policy during the short period since he became President of the Board of Trade, than all the ministers who have preceded him for the last hundred years." But the Chancellor still only talked of retiring; only wrote to Lord Liverpool that he had no wish to remain Chancellor, believing, as he did, that all who remained — that is, acted with the two "adventurers" would "stand a very good chance of being disgraced." And how was it, with regard to this matter of disgrace, to be brought upon the Cabinet by this "adventurer?" "And it ought to be remembered to his honour," the "Edinburgh Review" says of Mr. Huskisson, "that the measures he has suggested, and the odium thence arising, have not been proposed and incurred by him in the view of serving any party purpose, but solely because he believed, and most justly, that these measures were sound in principle, and calculated to promote the real and lasting interests of the public." A new period had indeed set in. The "combination of great families" had been conscientious in their way; in discharging their responsibility to their "party," and toiling and endeavouring to achieve its "purposes." Now, here was a man out of their pale (and therefore "an adventurer,") who ruled in his province for "the real and lasting interests of the public." When William Huskisson and his period came in, it was certainly time for Lord Chancellor Eldon to go out: for his period was indisputably expiring.

And now—for the coming in of Huskisson's times.

During the war, when manufactures and commerce were in an artificial state, the British people had paid an amount of taxes which now appears scarcely credible. What should we think of having to pay now, in taxes and loans, never less, and usually more, than a hundred millions a year? Yet this is what was paid from 1805 to 1818. In 1813, the amount paid in was £176,346,023. And in raising this amount of proceeds, great injury was done by the method of collection, which was expensive and burdensome to excess. Mr. Vansittart did not understand his business: and no one seems to have been able to teach it to him, or anxious to bid him learn it. He seems never to have perceived that to double a tax is not to double its proceeds. He did not consider that the lower ranks of society are the largest in number; and that numbers lessen with increase of rank, either of birth or money. He

Edinburgh Review, Sept. 1826, p. 359.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. p. 468.

Edinburgh Review, Sept. 1826, p. 359.

THE DEBT AND TAXATION.

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never could see that if a tax was doubled—a tax on any commodity or usage—a certain number of persons would give up the commodity or usage, from inability to pay the heavy tax: and that those who would cease to pay would be the poorer—that is, the larger class. If Mr. Vansittart wanted more money, he doubled a tax, reckoned on double the former amount of proceeds, prepared and presented his estimates on this supposition, was, of course, disappointed, and had recourse to loans, or resorted to the Sinking Fund; or in some way plunged deeper, till he could induce the House to increase some other tax. Such was the method of administration which gave advantage to seditious declaimers, and enabled Mr. Cobbett to carry with triumph, on the hustings at Norwich, resolutions in favour of applying the funds of the Church and the Crown Lands to the payment of the Debt, abolishing all pensions, and suspending almost every kind of income, for purposes of relief from taxation. It was clear that the pressure of taxation was now too great to be borne; and that something must be done to arrest the demoralizing discussion of the question, whether the Debt could not somehow be got rid of.

Those days appear to us not very remote: yet it is difficult to believe how little remote they are when we call to mind the way in which the Debt was talked over. A large number of gentlemen contrived to convince themselves and one another that the Debt was a source of public wealth—a name or imagination which capitalists could trade in for mutual advantage, and for a share in which rich foreigners would pay hard cash into the country. Such men would not, of course, have the Debt diminished. An opposite, and daily increasing party, which was not confined to those who found it hard to live, wanted to sweep it away altogether. It was not uncommon, in those days, to meet with persons who called themselves politicians, who would say openly “Ah! you know, after all that can be said, we must come to the sponge.” The Cobbetts, Hunts, and Wolseleys of those days—the shrewd, the ignorant, and the weak leaders of the people, not only spoke strongly (as they might reasonably do) of the hardship of the annual payment of the interest of the Debt, but misled multitudes as to the origin and nature of the Debt itself. They not only exposed the badness of the principle of mortgaging the industry of future generations; and showed the mischief of diverting annually from productive purposes so many millions as go to pay the fundholder; and ridiculed the Sinking Fund: all this was fair enough: but they went so far as to represent the Debt as incurred by the aristocracy, for personal objects hostile to the national interest: and they clamoured for a confiscation of the property of the Crown, and the Church, and the aristocracy; and, failing these, for an expunging of the Debt, throwing the support of the fundholders wholly on the aristocracy. There were others who understood the origin and progress of the Debt rightly enough; and who saw that, however indefensible was the great increase of it during the wars of the last century, the most vast and rapid increase of it took place during the present century, when this prodigious expenditure had become indispensable to our national existence. While mourning over the American War, and other unhappy conflicts which raised the Debt from 129 millions in 1775 to 360 at the peace of Amiens in 1802, they remembered that the vital struggle which ensued, between 1803 and the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815, added 420 millions to the capital of the Debt—

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an addition for which it seems impossible to blame, with any show of reason, any class or party at home. But those who understood accurately the origin of the Debt fell into strange errors about the means of its liquidation. Some trusted to the Sinking Fund, even up to this date and beyond it. They did not see the double mischief connected with the Sinking Fund: that while there was in reality any surplus revenue applicable to its purposes, the Government would, almost of course, help itself to the money, under any temporary embarrassment, to avoid proposing new taxes while the people found it more and more difficult to pay the old: and then, that the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund would borrow to make up the deficiency. Absurd as it appears in the case of an individual that a man should borrow in one direction to pay a debt in another—paying perhaps higher interest to his new creditor than to the old—and should then call for congratulations on the decrease of his first debt, this is exactly what was done by the government, prior to this date. Mr. Pitt no doubt honestly believed that the money accruing to the Sinking Fund would be allowed to accumulate untouched: but Mr. Vansittart declared in 1813, that the sum produced by the Sinking Fund “would be an instrument of great force in the hands of parliament, which might lead to the most important results:” and Lord Londonderry, just before his death, avowed that “he had never represented the Sinking Fund as a saving to be held sacred, but as a mode of placing a large sum at the disposal of parliament, to be by them disposed as might be thought most equitable, whether for the relief of a pressing exigency of the present day, or for the security of posterity.” While this extraordinary laxity of profession was used by members of the government, there was no less laxity in the actual management of the so-called fund. The operations were curious enough in many ways: but the result was the most curious of all. While Ministers were announcing that the Sinking Fund had paid off nearly twenty-five millions of the Debt since 1817, the public were wondering how it was that the interest of the Debt was heavier by £700,000. By borrowing, with all manner of ingenious and costly devices, on the one hand, to pay on the other, the managers had actually increased the Debt by seven millions and a half since 1817, and had added £700,000 to the interest. Since the close of the war the interest was upwards of eleven millions. Something must be done.

One process which had been begun in 1808 for the liquidation of the Debt, has acted well, as far as it has gone: and it is probable that whenever any effectual reduction of the Debt takes place, it will be through a large extension of this method;—that of converting permanent into terminable annuities,—at some present sacrifice, of course, but with certain future relief. But this present sacrifice, this immediate increase of charge, was the objectionable feature at the date of which we write, when the public safety required a lightening of the burdens of the people. In Sir H. Parnell’s “Financial Reform” there is an observation, that “if all the loans which have been raised since the beginning of the war of 1739 had been borrowed in annuities for ninety-nine years, their extinction would already have commenced.” We should now have been outgrowing the debt from year to year, and feeling its shackles falling off incessantly from our productive industry. And we may prepare for the emancipation of a future generation now, by adopting this method in our day; by

making some increased sacrifice to pay, for the sake of our children, the debt incurred by our fathers. Mr. Vansittart witnessed the action of this method; and so did Mr. Robinson, his successor; and both declared their approbation of it. Yet, driven hard by the exigencies of the times,—that is, by the popular discontent,—they had recourse to a directly opposite method of dealing with the Debt;—burdening posterity, for the sake of a very slight temporary relief: and they found not a few followers and admirers, who praised both schemes in the same breath.

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The sum required in 1822 for the discharge of half-pay and pensions was five millions. If these had been let alone, the whole would have fallen in 'in about forty-five years, from the dying off of the recipients. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer conceived a project of converting these annually diminishing claims into a set of permanent annuities for the term of forty-five years; fixing this permanent annuity at £2,800,000, and providing by its immediate sale for the discharge of the half-pay and pensions, with some considerable surplus. Nobody bought in the first year. In 1823, the Bank of England bought a portion of the long annuity, on terms which afforded the people of 1823 to 1828 an amount of nine millions and a half, at the expense of those who were to come after them, and who are burdened with an annual payment of £585,740 for the thirty-nine succeeding years. Mr. Vansittart had devised this scheme; and Mr. Robinson believed himself obliged to carry it through, though the circumstances of the times made the bargain with the Bank as disadvantageous in its terms as it was objectionable in its principle.—Strangely enough, Mr. Robinson, in bringing forward his budget, in the spring of 1823, reckoned twice over a sum of two millions, expected to accrue from this arrangement: so that the declared surplus of five millions which was destined to reduce the debt was at once sunk to three.

Such was the state of the affairs of the Debt, at the date of the accession to office of the new men. The country was less afflicted than it had been; and there was a decided revival in manufactures and commerce. But the pressure of taxation was one which the nation was beginning to declare that it could not and would not bear, after eight years of peace: and so loud was the cry for reform of parliament, as the shortest way to a remission of taxation, that it was time for government not only to consider, but to show what could be done. The new men were as heartily annoyed by all mention of reform of parliament as their predecessors and their colleagues. They must set to work to obviate it by improving the condition of the nation.

There were two ways of doing this. One was to lessen the amount of the taxes: the other was, to increase the ability of the people to pay them. Both objects were good; but in the first there was nothing new,—nothing expansive,—nothing significant of a better time. The minister who lays on new taxes, always talks about taking them off by-and-bye: and when they are taken off, there is so much saving to so many individuals; so much left free for investment in productive industry. The process is good; and it is pleasant to everybody, from the humblest tax-payer, who saves his penny in his weekly wages, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, who announces welcome news, and sees smiles on every face in return. This was Mr. Robinson's process; and he went into it with a temper so benign and sanguine, that he did

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not always come out of the experiment with such credit as he anticipated. He became known by the name of Prosperity Robinson when it was found, year after year, that he underrated drawbacks, and overrated the public condition: and that he was only too like himself when he exulted in the reduction of the Debt during the years which had actually added above seven millions and a half to its capital. In this spring of 1823, however, the minister's tendency to optimism was not fully known; and his announcement of a large reduction of taxation was received with enthusiasm, though his scheme included the objectionable arrangement with the Bank, for the commutation of the half-pay and pension charges. Several small taxes, annoying in their operation, were taken off altogether, at a sacrifice of less than £78,000:—such as taxes on mixed services, on occasional gardeners, on the lower order of taxed carts, and some of the horses, mules, and ponies, used in trade and husbandry. There was a reduction of the window-tax; fifty per cent. was taken off the taxes on servants, carriages and horses: and Ireland was relieved of the whole of the assessed taxes.—In the preceding year, some considerable reductions had been forced upon ministers, who had taken off the greater part of certain very onerous taxes,—as those on salt and leather, and the annual malt-tax. On that occasion, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer did not see how the labouring man needed pity for paying from 20s. to 25s. a year for salt; since it was paid “in almost imperceptible portions” from his weekly wages: but he was compelled to try what the labouring man would think of the change.—Now a year later a new Minister voluntarily and exultingly came forward to repeal taxes: and the labouring man, telling over his weekly wages in his cottage, began to feel that there was good, even to him, in peace above war.

COMMERCIAL
POLICY.

The other way to improve the condition of the nation was by increasing their ability to pay their taxes:—by expanding their trade,—giving them an increased command of the materials of their manufactures, and an improved security of production, sale, and returns. In every direction, the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce of England were hampered by laws and arrangements which, originally intended for safeguards, had become restrictions. The food of the whole people was to be grown in their own island; and its supply was at the mercy of the weather, and of the changing state of men's minds under the fluctuation of their fortunes: so that the prices of corn and other food, the rent of the rich and the loaf of the poor, rose and fell in extremes which destroyed all confidence and all regularity; whereas, if the world were laid open to the constant demand of the nations, the abundance of one region would supply the deficiency of another, and a natural balance would be established. As far as was possible, the same ancient plan was pursued with regard to the materials of manufactures. Instead of a liberty of purchase of hemp, silk, wool, timber, &c., where they could be had best, and when they were most wanted, all sorts of impediments were interposed in the way of obtaining supplies; and production was rendered difficult and scanty in proportion. Instead of a liberty of sale of all productions, the producers were hampered by treaties and laws, the jealousies of governments, and the meddling of rulers, till the markets of the world were brought into an artificial state which discouraged enterprise and industry, by making them cost more, in money, risk, and anxiety, than they were worth. In truth, the methods which had been devised when

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states were young and half-peopled, and rulers were inexperienced, were now outgrown. They were applicable no longer: and now, when wars were over for the time, and countries were fully peopled, and inventions sprang up every day, and arts and economy improved from year to year, it was necessary that men should have more liberty to produce and to exchange. Society was now large, full and busy enough to come under the great natural laws which regulate communities of men as infallibly as they regulate systems of worlds: it had outgrown the superintendence of a handful of managers who once thought it their business to dispense all its affairs according to their own notions. When Adams, the mutineer, found himself in command of the little company from the Bounty, and ruler of their island, he began with a sort of paternal rule. He dictated what clothes his subjects should wear, and how they should enclose their gardens, and how much land should be set apart for growing yams, and how much for maize: and he might even order this plant to be watered, and that to be sheltered, and another to be carefully reared in a seed-bed; but when his little company had spread out into a tribe, he could rule them no longer as a father, but as a legislator and judge. His business in his old age was to frame, with their concurrence, rules of behaviour, which he was to see enforced: but when he sat before his cottage on the knoll, and looked abroad over their harvest, spreading as far as he could see, and saw the people thronging in their market, and their boats going to and fro among the islands in the sea, he could no longer dream of such a task as regulating their households and their fortunes. He must leave them to till their fields, and choose their fishing-grounds, and dye their webs, and sell their cargoes in the way they might find answer best to them; certain that what was most conducive to the prosperity of each individual family must tend most to the welfare of the whole community.—Thus, there had been a time in England when the King and his advisers had ordained what clothes should be worn by the different classes of the people; what prices they should give for their food; what wages they should receive for their labour. When that close interference had to be given up, the voice and hand of the sovereign and the legislature were still heard and felt among the most important transactions of production and trade, spoiling what they could no longer regulate. At the time we are contemplating, the mischief was found to be pressing very heavily. The taxes were burdensome; the supply and prices of food were precarious and fluctuating: and when the sentinels of war were withdrawn from the boundaries of kingdoms and continents, it was found that commerce could not pass, on account of restrictions at home. The nation cannot be said to have had a clear view and purpose as to what should be done, to improve its ability to pay its taxes: nor did the mind of any statesman, perhaps, embrace the whole scope of the reforms now to be instituted: but the stir throughout the country and in parliament, in this session of 1823, showed the general sense that something must be done, and Mr. Huskisson was the man who saw furthest into the nature and necessity—the philosophy and fact of the case. The aim at Freedom of Trade was not at present a great national idea, like that of Reform of Parliament. Men were going unconsciously into the great change which the next twenty years were to accomplish: but, on looking back to this session of 1823, it seems that we may date thence the emancipation of trade, not only because Mr.

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Huskisson then entered the cabinet to begin the work, but because the need of the work being begun brought Mr. Huskisson into the cabinet.

The novelty and terror were not, in this case as in many, in the name of the measures required. The opponents of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform started back from the very names: but almost everybody professed to think "a more liberal commercial policy," and "the removal of restrictions on trade," very good things. The difficulty was that every step taken to attain these good objects was desperately contested. The "protection" of each particular interest was so fought for, that to free any one from restriction was as difficult as if the entire process had been opposed in the abstract. In a subsequent session, the House, which had already begun to jest on the tendency of each interest to recommend "a liberal commercial policy" for every one but itself, was brought to a full sense of the absurdity of this by the zeal of an honourable representative of a place abounding in glass-houses. He had helped to take off protecting duties from a great variety of articles in which his constituents were not particularly concerned: but when green glass bottles were mentioned, he started to his feet, and vowed he would defend to the last the protection to green glass bottles.—This was one difficulty. Another was, that few persons had yet learned to look at the subject in the large. While multitudes wished for a relaxation, few dreamed of an entire removal of restrictions: and while this lasted, reforms worked imperfectly, and men could not agree how much to aim at.

Annual Register,
1823, p. 119.

This year we are struck by the fact that numerous petitions were presented to Parliament, for the repeal of the import duties on foreign wool, while the manufacturers, the actual petitioners, would not hear of the free exportation of wool. The answer they received was that the import tax now yielded a revenue of £400,000, having risen to that from £250,000: that this seemed to show (one cannot now see how) that the duty did not injure manufacturers, while it was very important as revenue: but that foreign wool should be admitted free whenever the manufacturers would agree to a free exportation:—a point of wisdom which they had not attained. An improved Warehousing Bill was passed this year, with much difficulty. Some curious facts appeared about our trade with India, which pointed further than people then saw to the changes which the West India Islands were to undergo hereafter. Mr. Whitmore desired an inquiry into the duties on East and West India sugar. He showed that before the trade with India was rendered open, it had gone on in its own small way,—drugs, spices, silks, and a few muslins, being sent from India, and paid for with bullion from Europe. Now, since the opening of the trade, the whole business had assumed a new aspect. Instead of bullion, India received from us woollen goods to the amount of a million and a half. A more remarkable thing was, that instead of sending us her fine muslins, India sent us the cotton to make them of; and this cotton was spun, woven, sent back, and sold on the spot, cheaper than the inhabitants could sell muslin to each other. The exports to India of manufactured cotton amounted already to above a million per annum. The thing now desired was that India should be permitted to pay for our manufactures in her own product of sugar,—having little other means of payment, and our trade with that vast and populous country being henceforth limitable only by restriction on her means of

Annual Register,
1823, p. 102.

paying for what we could supply. It was not likely that Mr. Whitmore would obtain his object, implicated as it was with the subject of West India slavery; but he had the honour of driving Mr. Huskisson himself to his wit's end to defend the existing state of the sugar duties, and get rid of the facts about India: and it was one of the long series of preparatory steps which are still leading us on towards an ultimate free trade in sugar, through a wilderness of difficulties caused by former vicious restrictions, not only on freedom of trade, but on the liberty of man.

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The Silk Manufacturers stirred this year against the bad political economy of a former reign. When the silk manufacture was almost entirely confined to Spitalfields, statutes were passed empowering the magistrates to fix the amount of wages, and settle a good many other matters which lay pretty widely out of their province. The manufacture could not flourish under this kind of superintendence as it now did in other parts of the country where no such meddling was authorized: and it was clear that the Spitalfields manufacture must perish utterly, unless left free to compete with that of other districts. The reasonableness of this was clear enough; and the House seemed ready to repeal the restrictive acts, when Mr. T. Fowell Buxton presented a petition signed by eleven thousand journeymen silk weavers, who supposed that their bread was gone if their wages were no longer to be fixed by law. The honourable members were not convinced, but they were daunted by the "dismay and alarm" of the journeymen: and some of them begged for delay. Mr. Huskisson saw no use in delay in following up a principle which all agreed to be sound: but, sound as the principle was declared to be, the majority on the second reading of the bill was only 8, in a House of 128. On the third reading, the majority was still only 13. This is sufficiently remarkable at a date so late as 1823: but the ultimate fate of the bill is a yet more wonderful circumstance. The Lords were afraid to alter old laws in a hurry. The Lord Chancellor especially, while professing not to understand much of political economy, implored their lordships not to touch any old laws without abundant delay. The peers introduced several amendments into the bill, which would have continued to the magistrates the power of fixing wages, while kindly permitting the manufacturers to invest their capital where they pleased, instead of confining them, as hitherto, within a distance of ten miles from the Royal Exchange. If the bill thus amended had passed, its operation would have been, of course, to drive the capitalists to some manufacturing district where they could pursue their business free from magisterial interference, leaving the eleven thousand petitioners unemployed and helpless. But the promoters of the bill disowned it when loaded with vicious amendments: and it dropped for the time. The historical fact of its discussion at so late a date of our history, when Mr. Huskisson said he could hardly account for the existence of such a statute, is worth the trouble it gave at the time, and the small pains of noticing it here.

The most important change which took place now, or had ever taken place, in relation to commercial freedom, was opened, to parliament and the country, on June the 6th, by Mr. Huskisson, in a Committee of the House.

The system of Navigation Acts had begun in Cromwell's time, when it occurred to the statesmen of the day that an everlasting commerce might be

SPITALFIELDS ACTS.

Hansard, ix. 382.

Hansard, ix. 818.

Hansard, ix. 1532.

NAVIGATION ACTS.

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secured to the shipping of Great Britain if the productions of Asia, Africa, and America were permitted to be brought in only in British ships, commanded only, and manned chiefly, by British subjects. A law to this effect was made in the 12th year of Charles II.: and the same law imposed duties on European produce also, if brought in foreign vessels, which secured the monopoly to British shipping. The plan appeared to work well till after the American war: but then, American ships, which had before enjoyed the privileges of those of the mother country, were excluded with those of all other foreign states. They came to England in ballast, while British vessels carried cargoes both ways. It could not be supposed that they would submit to this: and the United States government imposed the same restrictions on British ships that their own vessels suffered under. Then the ridiculous spectacle was seen of the ships of both countries going in ballast, in order to return with cargoes: the consumers of the cargoes having, of course, to pay for the expensiveness of the voyage. The double freight was actually paid by the consumers of both countries till 1815, when the two governments agreed to repeal the restrictive duties. The wedge was now introduced which was to break up the monopoly all over the field of commerce. In 1822, Mr. Wallace, President of the Board of Trade, carried five bills which relaxed the restrictions to a considerable extent with regard to the shipping of other countries. This was done amidst the most doleful prophecies of the ruin of our foreign trade, and the most angry remonstrances on behalf of the shipping interest of England: but the thing must be done, for Portugal had retaliated: the Netherlands had decreed a premium of ten per cent. on all merchandise imported in Dutch bottoms, to take effect at a certain date, if England did not change her policy: and Prussia had raised the dues on all British vessels, and declared her intention to retaliate further, if England did not surrender her monopoly. The immediate consequence of such relaxation as took place in 1822 was a stimulus to commerce which surprised the croakers. They insisted that the briskness would not last: but it was necessary to try; for Prussia was firm in her retaliatory intentions, while expressing an enlightened desire for freedom of commerce. The Prussian Minister declared, in his note on the subject, the principle held by his government: "that reciprocal commercial restrictions were reciprocal nuisances, prejudicial to all nations having reciprocal interests, and particularly to those engaged in extensive commerce; and that the policy of Prussia was to substitute, in the place of reciprocal prohibitions, reciprocal facilities." The time was now come for deciding whether the vessels of all states were to go empty one way, charging all consumers double freight: or whether they should fetch and carry all they could for the same cost, to the great extension of commerce, and in natural justice to the consumers of all countries. It hardly needs to be pointed out that foreign states would soon have agreed to dispense with British shipping, as far as possible, and to supply one another by means of a less expensive commerce than hers. The time was now time for deciding on the principle, and decreeing the destiny, of our commerce: and Mr. Huskisson, on this 6th of June, proposed his Reciprocity of Duties Bill. By this bill all duties and drawbacks were to be imposed and allowed on all merchandise equally, whether carried in and out by British or foreign vessels. A provision was added, that the King in council should still have power to reciprocate

Annual Register,
1822, p. 122.

Huskisson's
Speeches, ii. 204.

Hansard, ix. 798.

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restriction. Under this authority, the former restrictions were to be continued towards any state which should continue to impose disadvantages on British shipping. The case was so clear—the pressure of the circumstances, if not the principle—that the bill passed the Commons by a majority of 5 to 1—75 to 15. One significant remark was made, just before the division, which should not escape the notice of an observer of those times. “Mr. Stuart Wortley thought that the principles which now began to work in regard to commercial regulations, must ere long be applied to those of agriculture.” The great change now “began to work:” and this session will ever be a marked one accordingly. Hansard, ix. 1439.

The outcry of the shipowners was great—almost as loud as that of the agricultural interest. Their grievances were real; but they mistook their remedy. The most important of their body possessed ships which were built when the materials of ship-building were dear: whereas ships were now daily brought into use which were built with comparative cheapness. Some of these cheaper ships were British: but the foreign ones had the further advantage of their timber not being subject to the heavy duty on Baltic timber which our shipowners had been able to bear during the war, but now found very onerous. Mr. Huskisson noticed this, in his closing speech on the Reciprocity Bill, and pointed to a time when this duty might be remitted. He saw, what the shipowners could not then see, that their hope of revived prosperity lay in a further liberation of commerce; and not in an attempted return to old restrictions, now become impracticable. Mr. Huskisson offered a benefit to the shipping interest which deprived them of all reasonable ground of complaint: but they would not accept it. He offered to grant to British ship-builders a drawback equal to all the duties paid upon the materials used in constructing and equipping their vessels. The shipowners declined this, in the fear that a stimulus would thus be given to ship-building at home. It is plain that they could not have at once cheap ships and the monopoly claimed on account of dearness of build. They could not now have the latter; and they refused the former advantage: and bitter were their complaints, at that time, as they are even at this day. But in a little while they ceased to obtain any pity from those who knew the facts of their case. From the time of the passage of the Reciprocity Acts, a rapid increase in British shipping took place. In the last nineteen years of the restrictive system, the increase in British tonnage was ten per cent.: while, in the first twenty-one years after the passage of the Reciprocity Acts, the increase has amounted to forty-five per cent. We may rejoice therefore that while the whole of the rest of society has been enjoying the benefits of cheapened freight, and consequent extension of commerce, the shipping interest has derived its share of advantage from the change. Political Dictionary, ii. p. 708.

The more vital question of Reform of Parliament was brought forward again this year, with evidences of increasing strength. On the presentation of a petition from the Corporation of London in favour of Parliamentary Reform, brought to the bar of the House by the sheriffs, Lord John Russell declared that “it gave him infinite satisfaction to see the growing interest which all classes were taking in the question of Reform.” The Norfolk petition—the extraordinary one carried by Mr. Cobbett by means of the discontents of the farmers—excited due horror and ridicule in the House by its proposed attacks on the PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.
Hansard, viii. 129.

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Hansard, viii.
1147.

Church and the Funds: but the great "sensation" of the session was caused by the presentation of the Yorkshire petition for Reform. It measured 380 feet in length: and it was signed by two-thirds of the freeholders of Yorkshire, including a large majority of the aristocracy of that great county. This circumstance shows how important was the progress that the question had really made. The Norfolk one might have been procured, as was stated, by Cobbett's shouting to a crowd of impoverished farmers and hungry labourers,—“Here's what will save your beds from being taken from under you:—here's what will fill your bellies!” and by his calling fundholders “bottle-spiders” and the clergy “black slugs:” but no objections could be made to the character of the Yorkshire petition, signed by 17,000 educated and propertied men. The utmost pains had been taken, Lord Milton declared, to exclude the names of all who were not *bonâ fide* freeholders: and he believed that there were not 50 names out of the 17,000 to which any exception could be reasonably made. No immediate conversion, however, appeared to be effected within the house: nor was there any gradual progress made to emulate that without. The annual debate was as languid as usual; and Lord John Russell's motion, proposing “serious consideration,” was negatived by a majority of 111 in a house of 449.

Hansard, viii.
1287.

CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

The discussion of the Catholic Claims was this session enlivened by a fearful quarrel in the house, which appeared at the time injurious to the cause, but which was perhaps not so in reality, while it discloses to us now the difficulties of Mr. Canning's position, and the precariousness of political peace to him at home, while he was, in his function, the pacificator of the world. He had said on some recent occasion, that he thought it impossible, in the existing state of parliament and the country, to form an administration which should agree upon this and other great questions, so as to be able to carry on the business of the country. There was nothing in this declaration which would have attracted much attention from any one else: for all the world knew that the existing cabinet were cordially united on only one great subject—opposition to Parliamentary Reform. But Mr. Canning's words were caught up as meaning that he considered the cause of the Catholics hopeless. The main error lay in concluding him to suppose that the question could not be carried but by the whole of an administration being agreed in its favour; whereas he declared, in the course of the explanation, “I did not mean it: nor do I think such an administration necessary.” Under this supposition, and amidst the uneasiness felt in sympathy with the expectant Catholics, who had hoped much from Mr. Canning's accession to office, and in fear lest their patience should not hold out, nothing was more likely than that Mr. Canning should be at once condemned as having deserted the cause, and sacrificed the Catholics to his own ambition.

Hansard, viii.
1082.

On the night of the 17th of April, the Catholic question was debated, on occasion of a petition in favour of their claims being sent up from fifty-five clergymen in the diocese of Norwich. During the accidental and short absence of Mr. Canning, Sir F. Burdett made a fierce attack upon him for his supposed defection: to which the accused replied on his return. Mr. Tierney followed in a speech which charged Mr. Canning with the ruin of the hopes of the Catholics, and with all the possible consequences of that ruin, from his having taken office without making the concession of the Catholic claims an absolute

Hansard, viii.
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condition. Mr. Grey Bennet declared, that "he now thought the affair was a perfect trick; or what, in familiar language, was called a humbug." All this was somewhat trying to the nerves of a man singularly sensitive, in health far from robust, and in a state of anxiety, no less for a cause he had much at heart than for his own political honour. But there was more to come. Mr. Brougham followed with one of those violent accusatory speeches, charged with insult, which had in those days a power that we now find it difficult to understand,—so enduring as censure is usually rendered by extravagance in the expression. It was too much for Mr. Canning. He sat in constrained stillness, while hearing of his "monstrous truckling," "political tergiversation," &c., his cheek flushing, his nostril quivering, his eyes almost glaring, till he interrupted his adversary by slowly rising, with his eye fixed upon him, and saying, with forced calmness, "I rise to say that that is false." There was a dead silence in the House for some seconds; and even the Speaker seems to have been taken by surprise. It was he who broke the silence by saying, in a low tone, that he hoped the Right Honourable Secretary would retract the expression he had used, as one not permissible by the laws and customs of the House. Mr. Canning refused to retract "the sentiment;" and Mr. Brougham to explain away his imputation. The matter was got rid of by an unusual stretch of the usual explanation in such cases; that the charge referred to the political and not the private character of Mr. Canning. On the face of it, this was absurd and untrue: but to such shifts were the opponents of Mr. Canning more than once reduced during these few latter years of his life when he stood almost alone in the legislature and the cabinet, while supported with a growing enthusiasm by the people. This quarrel, so far transcending the ordinary squabbles in parliament, yielded some good results. It fixed universal attention on Mr. Canning's view of the present state of the Catholic question; that it rested securely on its own merits; and that unity of opinion in the existing cabinet about it was not necessary to its settlement.

A step was taken this session with regard to the Punishment of Death, which was of importance, in as far as it tended to separate the idea of death punishment from crimes which were no longer capital. The practice of passing sentence of death when every one knew it would not be executed, had long been found very demoralizing: and the practice was now superseded by one not more defensible, but less offensive and pernicious. In convictions of felony short of murder, discretion was afforded to the judge to reserve the case avowedly for a commutation of punishment by recording, instead of pronouncing, the sentence of death ordained by the law; such record having the same effect "as if such judgment had actually been pronounced in open court, and the offender had been reprieved by the Court." Such an arrangement shows how little the great principle was understood that certainty of punishment is of more consequence than the degree of it. When it is considered that most criminals are ignorant, it appears important above everything that the consequences of crime should be made as plain and intelligible, and as certain as possible. The levity of pronouncing a sentence which every one knew to be a mere form was now to be avoided: but it was by what appeared to the criminals whom it concerned a falsehood and a quibble. "Do you know," asked a prison-visitor of a young thief, "what your sentence will be if you are found guilty?" "Yes:—death recorded." "And

SENTENCE OF DEATH.

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1823, p. 88.

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do you know what that means?" "Yes:—transportation." It will be a marvel to a future generation, that we are yet so far from letting our yea be yea, and our nay nay, in penal legislation, where stern truth and plain retribution ought to be our first care.

FELONY.

Annual Register,
1823, p. 88.

A remnant of barbarism was next got rid of by abolishing the old custom (for which there was no express warrant of law) of ignominious burial of persons *felo de se*. Up to this time, it had been the practice to bury such suicides in some public place; usually at the intersection of four roads, a stake being driven through the body. One consequence of this was, that a verdict of *felo de se* was very rarely returned; the coroner's jury offering a verdict of insanity, without or against evidence, in almost all cases of suicide. Since the passing of Mr. Lennard's bill, in this session, persons guilty of *felo de se* have been interred in burial-grounds, without funeral rites on the one hand, or barbarous usage on the other; within twenty-four hours of the return of the verdict, and between the hours of nine and twelve at night.

MARRIAGE ACT.

Hansard, viii. 236.

The subject of the Marriage law came up again; the Act of the preceding year having been encumbered by so many troublesome forms as to impede marriage, instead of fostering it; which it was the intention of the bill to do. At the beginning of this session it was represented that marriages had remarkably decreased since the passage of the new Act, and that loud complaints were made by the poorer classes of society, to whom it was most desirable to make the forms of marriage easy. The obstructive clauses were immediately repealed; and a Committee of the Lords was appointed to frame a permanent bill. An attempt was made by this Committee to restore the voidability of marriage under certain circumstances: but the sense of parliament was against it; and the clause which would have rendered certain marriages of minors voidable within a certain period was thrown out by a majority of six.

Hansard, ix. 664.

NEGRO SLAVERY.

Nothing is more memorable in the history of this year than the movement in the House and in the West Indies on the subject of Negro Slavery. Those who had achieved the abolition of the slave trade had declared (and no doubt in all sincerity at the time), that their aim was confined to this object: but when men have entered upon a work of principle, be it what it may, they had better decline saying how far they will go. They can no more say beforehand where they will stop in the application of a principle than in the development of a science. New light is not calculable; and the future must be left to reveal itself. Thus did the truth now appear to the abolitionists. Their work was only begun; and they must not rest till they saw the end. At present, it is now clear, they did not see the end: and they had much to learn about the means: much that we know only through their labours and sufferings, and which we must therefore apply to their case with reverence and gratitude.—They did not yet see fully that while there is slavery in the world, there will be a slave trade: and that therefore the opposition should be made, in all parts of the world, not to the trade, but to the institution, through effectual denunciation of its principle. They did not then know that slaves can never be prepared by education for freedom: that freedom itself is the only possible education for a free man. They did not know that in regard to the abolition of slavery, "gradualism" is impossible. They did not see for long that gradual

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or prospective emancipation is indefensible in principle: and that, if it were not so, it would be impossible in practice. Those to whom they have bequeathed their good work see now,—and *they* saw it before they died,—that a man either can or cannot righteously be the property of man. If he can, then slavery is justified, and there is nothing for abolitionists to do. If not, there can be no tampering with the wrong; no retention of stolen goods; no satisfaction in the promise of restitution at a distant day. Nor, as the stolen goods are men, is it possible to put off their release. If they know that they are entitled to freedom, on the ground of natural right, at any future time, they are entitled to it now. If their children are to be free as a matter of right, they themselves have the right to be free now. This logic, which lies deep down in the negro's heart, and is ever ready upon his tongue, cannot be controverted by legislative enactment, even though all the highest wits of the world went to make the parliament.—All this appears plain enough to us now: but there is nothing in our modern history more interesting than the evolution of the proof. It seems like going back to the early tentative age of an established moral question, to read the debates of this session of 1823 on West Indian affairs.

Mr. Thomas Fowell Buxton moved, as a resolution, on the 15th of May, Hansard, ix. 274.
 “That the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished gradually throughout the British colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.” The enactments which he hoped would follow upon the adoption of this resolution, were such as would ordain the freedom of all children born after a certain day, and mitigate the condition of such slaves as were never to be freed. Mr. Canning seized at once upon the weak point;—the “gradualism.” He contended, that if slavery was repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the gospel, no terms ought to be held with it. It should be met by no proposal of gradual abolition, but by a demand for its immediate extinction. He declared, however, that while the spirit of English society and government was not that which could fraternize with slavery, it was certain that the legislature,—the maker and regulator of the British Constitution,—had sanctioned slavery in the colonies during preceding centuries. As for the rest of his speech, it amounted to much the same as those of everybody out of the band of associated abolitionists. He did not go quite so far as Mr. Baring, who, in the same breath, declared himself as sincere an abolitionist as any man, and deprecated all mention of the subject of slavery in that House, rebellion and bloodshed being sure to follow. He did not, like Mr. Baring and some others, regard the welfare of West India property as the only important consideration in the case. He did remember, as too many did not, that the negroes were a party in the case, and that their fate was an element in the question. But he was not prepared to assert any principle, or to contemplate any course of action, which should bring the abolition of the institution into question practically, within any assignable time. He proposed resolutions declaratory of the expediency of immediately ameliorating the condition of the British slave population; of the hope that such amelioration might fit the slaves for freedom: and of the desire of the House that these objects should be accomplished, at the earliest period that the safety of all parties would allow. Hansard, ix. 285, 286.

GOVERNMENT RESOLUTIONS.

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Hansard, ix. 360.

GOVERNMENT
CIRCULAR.Annual Register,
1823, p. 130.RECEPTION IN JA-
MAICA.Annual Register,
1823, p. 133.

IN BARBADOES.

This was as much as the most sanguine of the abolitionists had expected to obtain: and it was more than their adversaries were able to bear. After a long debate, Mr. Canning's resolutions were carried without a division: and it was ordered that they should be laid before the King by certain members of the Privy Council.—Then arose a prodigious clamour in the country, on the part of the West India interest. The government was declared to have gone over to ultra-abolitionism; and West India property fell in the market.—As for the colonies, when the news of the debate arrived, there was much anger: but there was at first little fear. Mr. Canning's resolutions were looked upon as mere declarations,—mere words: and abolition “in the abstract” is as little formidable to a slaveholder as slavery in the abstract is disturbing to the heart of an abolitionist like Mr. Baring, whose action in the matter consisted in recommending universal silence on the subject. It soon appeared, however, that the resolutions, and the house which had passed them, really meant something. A circular, dated from Downing-street, on the 24th of May, reached the functionaries of the different islands: and in this circular they read the doom of slavery. It did not convey anything which appears to us very tremendous. It drew the attention of its recipients to the debate in the House, and gave a decisive intimation that there must be an end of the flogging of women, and of the use of the whip in the field. It was not the nature of these particulars which affected so deeply the West Indian mind. It was the fact of the interference at all; the prospect of further interference; the dread of emancipation at last; and before all these, there was the besetting vision,—the panic which comes upon the slaveholder with every breath from over the seas,—his cold horror at noon,—his nightmare in the dark,—the apprehension of insurrection, if any one of a million of negroes should hear that the British government was thinking about them. To other people it appears that the very time when the negroes are least disposed to rebel is that when they know that their cause is in good hands: and that nothing is so likely to drive them to insurrection as the feeling that they have none to help them. In another country, and at a later time, this has proved eminently true. Before 1832, there were numerous revolts among the negroes in the slave states of North America: the average number being twelve in a year. Since Garrison rose up, to be the Moses to this multitude of bondmen, there have been no insurrections at all. The slaves are aware that their cause is in better hands than their own: and they wait, in trust and hope.

The House of Assembly in Jamaica was passionate, according to its wont; talked of proclaiming the independence of the islands, if parliament should attempt to dictate to them; talked of addressing the King to remove Lord Bathurst (the signer of the circular) from his Majesty's councils: talked of repealing the Registry Act; but did none of these things. What they did was to appoint a committee to consider what steps should be taken in consequence of the receipt of the circular: and they finally voted that they would take their own way of being just and kind to their slaves; and would not attend to any dictation from the mother country. They also voted an address to their Governor, in which they declared against making any alterations in their slave code.

In Barbadoes there was a rising: but it was of the slaveholding party. In

slaveholding countries, the poorest order of freemen are, as every body knows, a peculiarly depraved class; for reasons obvious enough. Where there are slaves to do the work of a society, industry is opprobrious, and idleness is honour. Such freemen as are too poor to have slaves, and to avoid work, are in a disgraced position: and none but the degraded would hold that position. A missionary at Barbadoes, named Shrewsbury, was believed to have written home to those who sent him that the lowest class of white men in that colony were ignorant and depraved. It is probable that he did so write; and that what he wrote was true. A multitude assembled round his chapel while he was in the pulpit, and silenced him with the noise of cat-calls and other clamour. The preacher stood in his place till he could be heard, and then went on with the service.—The rioters next put out placards, inviting the missionary's enemies to assemble at the chapel on the following evening. They did so, and levelled the building with the ground. A placard put forth by the governor, Sir Henry Warde, offering a reward for the apprehension of any of the persons engaged, was answered by one issued by the rioters, threatening vengeance on any one who should give information, and warning all missionaries not to set foot in Barbadoes;—a place which did indeed seem as alien as it thus declared itself from the religion of Christ. Mr. Shrewsbury was obliged to fly for his life. Such proceedings could not end at the point they had reached: and now ensued an excited state of suspense as to what was to happen next.

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Annual Register,
1823, p. 133.

And so it was in another colony, Demerara, whose name and fame were IN DEMERARA. deeply disgraced this year. When the circular reached the colony, the members of the government and other gentlemen talked of it in the presence of their domestic slaves, without making any express communications to the negroes on the subject of it, and even endeavouring to keep it secret from the field hands. When the Court of Policy passed regulations in accordance with the instructions of the circular, pains were still taken to conceal the whole affair from the negroes. From what they heard from the house-slaves, they naturally supposed that orders for their emancipation had arrived from England, and that they were to be defrauded of it. In most slave regions, this would have led to a massacre of the whites: and it no doubt would here, but for the influence of a missionary of the Independents, to whom the Episcopalian clergyman of the colony ascribes the whole merit of the fact, that not a drop of the blood of white men was shed.—This missionary, John Smith, had been in the colony for seven years, during which time he had trained his flock to habits of order, industry, submission, and peace. Under his care, marriage became almost universal; and not one marriage in fifty was violated. There was an extraordinary deficiency of religious ministers in this colony: and that one man could have effected what Mr. Smith did, shows what may be done by the calm and steady zeal of one man, whose single object is the improvement and happiness of his neighbours.—Just before the changes caused by the circular, the Governor, whose object was to “make head against the sectaries”—(among whom he included all the religious bodies in the colony except the one Episcopalian flock,—even the Dutch and Scotch churches, as well as the Methodist and Independent missionaries)—had issued a prohibition to all the negroes to attend public worship, except by means of a pass from their owners;—these owners being under no obligation to grant such a pass. When the slaves found them-

Edinburgh Review,
xl. p. 243.

SMITH, THE MISSIONARY.

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Annual Register,
1823, p. 135.

selves thus hindered in their worship, and believed themselves debarred from the liberty which the King had granted them, they rose upon their masters. They shed no blood; but they imprisoned the whites, and put some in the stocks. The first who rose were some upon the east coast, who had suffered most by the deprivation of liberty to attend church, and they were joined by others who thought more of the other cause of complaint. The rising took place on the 18th of August. On the 19th, martial law was proclaimed. On the 20th, the insurrection was completely over. While no white was sacrificed, above two hundred negroes were killed and wounded in the first instance: forty-seven were executed; and the floggings of many more were worse than death;—a thousand lashes being a frequent sentence. So much for the insurrection. It was Mr. Smith's story, in connection with it, which makes this particular revolt conspicuous above others in the history of our time.

Hansard, xi. 968.

Hansard, xi. 407.

Hansard, xi. 984.

Hansard, xi. 996.

The Governor kept the colony under martial law for five months after this insurrection of two days: and one of the persons brought to trial under this martial law was the Missionary, Mr. Smith. Now was the time, during the reign of martial law, for "making head against the sectaries." The one Episcopalian clergyman, however, gave the Governor no help in the valiant work. His testimony is all in favour of the "sectary" under persecution. He declared his conviction that "nothing but those religious impressions which, under Providence, Mr. Smith has been instrumental in fixing—nothing but those principles of the Gospel of Peace which he has been proclaiming—could have prevented a dreadful effusion of blood here, and saved the lives of those very persons who are now (I shudder to write it) seeking his." Under this reign of martial law, the pastor was kept in prison for two months before trial; in apartments,—the one, under the roof, exposed to burning heat,—and the other on the ground, fetid from the stagnant water visible under the boards of the floor. He was an invalid before his arrest: and his death under these circumstances is not to be wondered at. The mode and conduct of the trial abounded in illegalities; and his conviction took place, on the evidence of three negroes, who afterwards confessed that they had been wrought upon to allege what was wholly false. The charges were, of having incited the slaves to revolt; of having concealed their intention to rise; and of having refused (which he did on the ground of ill health, and of his clerical office) to serve in the militia, several days after the suppression of the rebellion. But the real purpose of the trial is obvious, through all the ill-supported pretences put forward in the military court which assembled in the name of justice. "No man," declared Mr. Brougham in parliament, "can cast his eye upon this trial without perceiving that it was intended to bring on an issue between the system of the slave law and the instruction of the negroes." This was, in truth, the cause in question; and John Smith was its martyr. The life of martyrs in a cause so vital and so comprehensive as this is rarely or never given in vain: and few have been laid down to more effectual purpose than that of the Demerara missionary.

He was sentenced to death: but his persecutors had not the courage to subject themselves to the consequences of executing a judgment so obtained. They transmitted the sentence to England, for the decision of the British government. The British government rescinded the sentence of the court martial, as far as related to the penalty of death, but decreed Mr. Smith's banishment

Annual Register,
1823, p. 137.

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from the colony. No time was lost in transmitting the information to Demerara: but before it arrived, the missionary was in his grave. His medical attendants had repeatedly declared that if he had not a better apartment, he must sink: but he was not removed; nor was he allowed a change of linen; nor the attendance of a friend to relieve the cares of his worn and wearied wife. He died on the 6th of February, 1824. The funeral was ordered to take place at two o'clock in the morning, that no negro tears might be shed over the pastor's coffin. The widow and her friend, Mrs. Elliot, intended to follow the coffin: but the head-constable declared that this could not be permitted. "Is it possible," cried Mrs. Elliot, "that General Murray can wish to prevent a poor widow from following her husband to the grave?" The widow exclaimed that General Murray should not prevent it: that she would go, happen what might. The head-constable went to his Excellency to report this, and brought back orders to imprison the women, if they attempted to follow the coffin. The mourners, therefore, went first. They left the jail, attended by a negro with a lantern, and arrived at the grave before the coffin was brought;—the light weight, carried by two negroes with a single lantern, and attended only by the clergyman, Mr. Austin, whose testimony in favour of his Christian brother we have quoted above. Two negro members of Mr. Smith's congregation, a carpenter and bricklayer, wished to mark the spot of their pastor's rest. They began to rail in and cover over the grave: but, by official orders, the brickwork was broken up, the rails torn down, and the spot left desolate.

Hansard, xi. 1066.
Edinburgh Review, xi. p. 270.

Mr. Smith died on the 6th of February. On the 24th of the same month, a public meeting of Demerara slave-owners resolved forthwith to petition the Court of Policy "to expel all missionaries from the colony, and to pass a law prohibiting their admission for the future."—The government paper of the same month declares, "It is most unfortunate for the cause of the planters, that they did not speak out in time. They did not say, as they ought to have said to the first advocates of missions and education, we shall not tolerate your plans till you prove to us that they are safe and necessary: we shall not suffer you to enlighten our slaves, who are by law our property, till you can demonstrate that when they are made religious and knowing, they will still continue to be our slaves."—Again, "To address a promiscuous audience of black or coloured people, bond and free, by the endearing appellation of 'My brethren and sisters,' is what can nowhere be heard except in Providence chapel." These are evidences, quite as strong as any connected with the trial, that the Christian religion was wholly inappropriate to Demerara society. These are evidences, as strong as any afforded by the trial, that "it was intended to bring on an issue between the system of the slave law and the instruction of the negroes:" and to one who clearly saw this, the cause would appear one worth dying for.—But to martyrs themselves, the scope of their case is seldom clear; and in this instance, the probability of such an animating comprehension was less than ordinary. This John Smith, perhaps, prepared himself, during his missionary training, for violence from half-naked savages,—for mockery in an unknown tongue,—for the fire, the flint-knife, the tomahawk, and every possible destitution of comfort and of intercourse: but he could hardly have anticipated persecution and heart-break from Christian gentlemen, and officials under the British government. If he saw clearly the scope of his own case,—saw that he

Hansard, xi. 997.

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was not the less a martyr for his judges being British officers, the curses on him uttered by Christian tongues, and his bolts turned by Christian hands, he might sustain his spirit amidst the reeking vapours of his dungeon, and the damps of death. In court, he had been silenced: but his voice was soon to be heard in the British Parliament, and by the firesides in Orkney and Scilly, and under the cane-roofs in India, and among the pine barrens of Canada. His private journal had been taken from his locked desk, to be pored over by malignant eyes: but he need not, therefore, wish that he had never written it. Once brought to light, the very light seemed to catch it up, and to present it, sun-printed, before all eyes that were vigilant for human liberties. He might have appeared to himself sunk in desolation, and squalor, and ignominious misfortune, when arrested, tried, and sentenced as a criminal under the semblance of the forms of British law and Christian authority: and he might not have felt that exhilaration of martyrdom which would have thrilled through him in a scene outwardly more savage. But not the less was he a martyr; and the cause was not the less express or worthy, because the heathens with whom he had to do, bore the Christian name. The true issue will never be forgotten:—"the issue between the system of the slave-law and the instruction of the negroes." It was understood in England as by an universal intuition;—by the whole nation,—from the King, in his sumptuous seclusion, going over the matter with the Premier, to the little child on its mother's knee, hearing its father tell on the cottage bench of the missionary's negro flock, his unfair trial, and his dreary lantern-burial. It needed only to be brought fairly before British minds, and near to British hearts, that slaves were anywhere denied to be their brethren and sisters,—were anywhere deliberately denied their birth-right of knowledge and religious fellowship,—to secure the overthrow of slavery.

From this time the doom of slavery was fixed, and known to be so; and the impotent struggles of resistance in the colonies served no other purpose so effectually as that of reminding men of Smith the missionary, and stimulating them to new efforts in the cause for which he died.

CLOSE OF SESSION.

The session of parliament closed on the 19th of July, the royal speech being delivered by commission, owing to the indisposition of the King. The noticeable point of the speech is its tone of congratulation on the abatement of agricultural distress, and on the high prosperity of commerce and manufactures.

CHAPTER VII.

THE year 1824 opened amidst such prosperity, that instead of grumbling, there was nothing heard of among capitalists of every order but anticipations of vast increase of wealth. The demand for all kinds of agricultural produce was steadily rising; and wheat was at 62s. on the average for the year. The price of bread was not complained of; for almost every class of labourers was well employed. The cotton manufacture increased largely: the iron masters were in high spirits: the hardware trade was brisk; and the woollen manufacturers made no complaint. In the exhilaration of the time, men were disposed to make haste to be rich: and the immense spread of joint-stock companies became a joke of the time:—a heavy joke enough in its issue; but very merry at the moment. While this exhilaration and satisfaction were apparent on the surface of society, and there was even in its depths a sense of comfort and hope not often enjoyed there, some things were going forward in by-places, which make us wonder now how men could have been satisfied with a state of things so obviously needing improvement in its principle and in many of its workings.

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PROSPERITY.

There were strange doings by night in the creeks and hollow-ways and caves of the southern coast: and a remarkable order of passengers by day in the packets from France. Every now and then, a fisherman's great boots were found to be stuffed with French lace, gloves, or jewellery; or a lady's petticoats to be quilted all through with silk stockings and lace. Here and there, a nice-looking loaf of bread was found to have a curious kernel of lace and gloves: and a roll of sail-cloth turned out to be a package of gay lutestring. In the dead of the night, a large body of men would work for hours noiselessly in the soft sands, rolling tubs of spirits, and carrying bales of goods in the shadows of the rocks, and through tunnels, and up chasms, under the very feet of the preventive patrol, and within sound of the talk of the sentries.—While this was going forward on the English coast, the smugglers on the opposite shore were engaged, with much more labour, risk, and expense, in introducing English woollens, by a vast system of fraud and lying, into the towns, past a series of custom-houses. In both countries there was an utter dissoluteness of morals connected with these transactions. Cheating and lying were essential to the whole system: drunkenness accompanied it: contempt for all law grew up under it: honest industry perished beneath it: and it was crowned with murder. Little children who lived near a smuggling haunt learned early to be sly, and to say anything that was convenient. Their mothers stole down to the sands at night to bring up light goods which they might hide in the rafters of the cottage, and spread temptingly before any foolish ladies within their reach. Or, if they did not themselves meddle, they reproached their husbands for

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working at the plough or the anvil when certain neighbours could make a pocketful of money in a night. As for the men, they were tapping a cask of spirits when their work was done at dawn, and passing the daylight hours in a drunken sleep, in some hidden place, instead of being at honest labour in the field or in the shop.—Then, if the expected boat did not come in, they would not meet for nothing, but go poaching in the nearest preserves. When detected, which was sure to happen pretty often, a conflict ensued : and the newspapers of the time abound in notices of preventive men and smugglers shot.

As for the loss and financial injury to the nations from this state of things,—it was estimated at a later period (1831) when smuggling had much declined, that the amount of duties evaded by the smuggling of French goods alone, and exclusive of the great article of tobacco, exceeded £800,000 a year : while the value of British goods smuggled into France by the Belgian frontier alone exceeded £2,000,000. All this demoralizing trade was taken out of the very substance of the honest trade which would have been carried on for the general good, if our commercial system had been a wise one. And there was, besides, an enormous annual outlay for the sake of obviating this undermining of the revenue. The Preventive Service and the Coast Blockade were the expensive apparatus employed for this end ; and fifty-two revenue cruisers were always hovering about the coasts. The Coast Blockade consisted of 1500 officers and seamen of the navy : and there was the Coast Guard besides, with their cottages and establishments. In 1822 and 1823 the number of captures was 52 vessels and 385 boats engaged in smuggling. The cost at that time amounted to between four and five hundred thousand pounds a year. When to this is added the expense of the dwellings of the Coast Guard, and all other items, the total annual cost of protecting the revenue may be estimated at not much below a million. This cost is independent of the loss to the revenue from the evasion of the legal duties, and of the injury to lawful commerce by the intervention of the smuggler. Amidst the general prosperity there was something wrong here.

Elsewhere, there was trouble of another kind. Exactly at the time when work was pressing most to be done, it was made impossible to get it done by the refusal of the workmen. The higher the prosperity, the higher ran the discontents between masters and men, and among the different ranks of workmen themselves. The strikes at this time were of a particularly formidable character ; and so were the mutual violences of the workpeople. At Macclesfield, there was a serious conflict between the soldiers and four hundred rioters, part of a body of six thousand who had risen against their employers on a question of time and wages. Near Glasgow, a mob of weavers assaulted and persecuted a family of their own craft for working for an obnoxious master : and in many places there were alarms and disorders,—hanging people in effigy, throwing vitriol, and even, it is believed, the commission of murder ; while the bulk of the workmen in every craft were under an insufferable tyranny from the domination of their leaders, and the employers were harassed with vain attempts to execute orders which would have enriched them and their men together. Here a public edifice was left unfinished till the best weather for building was past : there, in the dyer's office, where the perfection of the black dye depended on a speedy use of a favourable state of the atmo-

sphere, the goods were left in the vats exposed to the air for days, till they were spoiled. Elsewhere, the weaver who was willing to work for a twelfth hour in a busy time, for increased wages, was met in the dark, and told that he would be murdered if he worked for more than eleven hours; and another found his clothes burnt to rags with vitriol for not having refused to work for an unpopular master: and some disappeared altogether—departed or murdered. There was something wrong here—that such troubles should exist amidst the general prosperity.

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The new men ushered in by a new time took these mischiefs in hand. To consider the last-mentioned evils first—great changes were made this year in the laws respecting Wages.

The Spitalfields journeymen were now well employed; and they were as careless about the passage of the bill proposed the preceding year as they had then been alarmed. It was not that they had grown wiser; for they did not yet perceive that a fixed legal rate of wages must have the effect of stopping the manufacture in unfavourable seasons, and of precluding their employers from competing with those of Macclesfield and Paisley, and other places where labour and its rewards were left free. They did not perceive how much of their business had been driven out of Middlesex by their Middlesex privileges: but the eleven thousand who had earnestly petitioned against change the year before, now let change take its course. They were fully employed during this season of prosperity, and supposed it would be always so: so they said nothing against the repeal of the Spitalfields Act, which took place very quietly this session. Lord Lauderdale introduced the matter in the Upper House, where the change met with some opposition. In the Lower, no discussion took place at all. But for this proceeding, there can be no doubt that the silk manufacture in Spitalfields would have been extinct before this time.

REPEAL OF SPI-
TALFIELDS ACTS.

A Committee of the House, with Mr. Hume for its chairman, reported upon the laws relating to artisans and machinery. Three points had been especially considered by this Committee: the state of the Combination Laws: the question of permitting or prohibiting the emigration of artisans: and that of permitting or prohibiting the exportation of machinery. Of these three points, the last was left to stand over for future consideration. The Report declared, with regard to the second point, that no laws could effectually prevent the emigration of artisans: that it was inexpedient to irritate the feelings of a valuable order of men by denying them the liberty of travelling which every body else enjoyed, and interfering to prevent their carrying their labour to the best market: and that there was reason to believe that many valuable artisans who wished to return home remained abroad from a supposition that they were liable to punishment on their return. The total repeal of all laws affecting the freedom of travelling of artisans was therefore recommended. The recommendation was acted upon: and no opposition was made to this emancipation.

EMIGRATION OF
ARTIZANS.
Hansard, xi. 813.

The third point was a very serious one; the consideration of the Combination Laws. The Committee reported their conclusions,—that these laws were instruments of oppression in the hands of employers, who had the means of putting them in force against their men, while no case was known to the Committee of an employer being punished under them, even in the most flagrant

COMBINATION
LAWS.
Hansard, xi. 812.

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Huskisson's
Speeches, ii. 364.

cases of conspiracy against the interests of artizans. The report recommended that employers and their men should be left free, by a repeal of these laws, to manage their interests in their own way: and that that portion of the common law should be altered which treated as a conspiracy a peaceable meeting of masters and men. In the next session, Mr. Huskisson explained that some mistakes had been made in the proceedings which followed upon this Report: that the Bill founded upon the Report had been framed and passed too hastily, and without due legal supervision. The Bill repealed thirty or forty acts of parliament, and took away all the security given by the common law against the oppression and violence which might ensue upon combinations to regulate labour and wages. The repeal was, indeed, too sweeping and unguarded. The Act was no sooner passed than monstrous combinations arose, under which industry was paralyzed, and dangerous discontents threatened the peace of society. From August to January, scarcely a stroke of work was done in Glasgow and the neighbourhood. The turbulent compelled the timid to strike when they would fain have gone on to work in peace: and an organization was formed under which masters and men suffered for long years afterwards; the masters most in prosperous times, and the men in adverse seasons: but both parties always from mutual jealousy and a constant sense of insecurity. It is true that experience must teach in time, and that men must learn better from experience than from law, the injury on all hands when employers coerce the labour of the employed, and when artizans refuse to labour for capitalists, and stand idly aloof from the means of bread. It is true that experience appears to have taught the parties concerned something of this; for strikes are not now anything like what they were at the period of which we write. But at that time something must be done to control the existing license. Early in the session of 1825, Mr. Huskisson moved for a Committee to reconsider the action of parliament on the subject: and the result was that the Act of 1824 was repealed, and another substituted for it, which is the existing law. By this Act, combinations of masters and workmen to settle terms about wages and hours of labour are made legal: but combinations for controlling employers by moral violence were again put under the operation of the common law. By this as much was done for the freedom and security of both parties as can be done by legislation, which, in this matter, as in all others, is an inferior safeguard to that of personal intelligence.

FREE TRADE.

Important as was this era to the working classes on account of its legislation on Wages, it was yet more so as introducing Freedom of Trade, promotive of manufacture. The cotton manufacture had been allowed a fair chance from the beginning by freedom from those restrictions with which the silk and woollen trades had been fettered. In the history of the nation, the year 1824 will ever be memorable, for the sake of the benefits secured to the manufacturing classes by the new man of the new time.

These manufacturing classes were at this period holding a higher position in the nation than they had ever done before. The increase of numbers was not equally divided between the agricultural population and that engaged in manufactures and commerce. The increase of agricultural families was only two and a half per cent. of the whole, in the twenty years from 1811 to 1831, while that of manufacturing and trading families was nearly thirty-one and a

Porter's Progress,
&c., sec. iii. c. 9.

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half per cent. The disproportion had now begun which was to go on increasing up to the present day, and which must, as most persons agree, continue to increase till agriculture has so far improved, in science and art, as to create a demand for labour like that arising from freedom and consequent improvement in manufactures. In our own time we seldom see the children of artisan families destined to agricultural industry; while we as seldom see all the children of parents engaged in agriculture employed upon the soil. The farmer places out some of his sons in business, while his daughters marry tradesmen: and the field-labourer is glad to get his children out to service in the towns, or to employment in factories. The agricultural portion of society has, for many years, been diminishing, while the other departments of occupation have been increasing in a constantly augmenting proportion. The freedom of the cotton trade, in contrast with the restrictions on agriculture which went under the name of protection, were, no doubt, a chief cause of the shifting of the balance of preponderance prior to this time: and now the silk and woollen manufactures were to be allowed to prosper, after the same method as the cotton.

In the year 1685, the intolerant King of France, Louis XIV., drove many thousands of his best subjects out of his kingdom by persecution for their religious faith. It is believed that not less than 50,000 came to England: and of these many were skilled in silk-weaving. These Frenchmen were the original Spitalfields weavers. When they arrived, there was a free trade in silks with all countries where they were produced: but the immigrants obtained laws in their own favour before the century was out, which shut out all foreign silks whatever. In 1719, the brothers Lombe set up a silk-mill, — having learned, at great risk and expense, how the Italian silk-mills were constructed. The money they expended was under the security of the heavy duties which were laid upon the thrown silk imported from Italy: and when they had been repaid and rewarded by parliament, the expense of the establishment of silk mills in England was the reason always brought forward for continuing the heavy duties on foreign thrown silk, when any one proposed to get it cheaper from Italy. This was very hurtful to the manufacture in England, both as regarded its extension and the improvement of its quality. It advanced very slowly—much more slowly than was natural—till the introduction of cotton fabrics into general wear, towards the end of the century, threw it back for some years. In 1793, four thousand looms stood idle which had given employment to ten thousand persons seven years before. When the manufacture revived, it was in consequence of the vast increase in the production of silk in India, where the Company had introduced the Italian method of preparing the material. The price per lb. was not much lower than that of Italian silk, exclusive of duty: but in Italy only one crop of raw silk was produced in a year, while in India there were two or three. This abundance tended to remove those restrictions on manufacture which arise from scarcity of the raw material. Before 1770, only 100,000 lbs. of silk were imported, whereas in 1823 the quantity amounted to 1,200,000 lbs. of a much better quality. At that time the value of the silk manufacture was estimated at ten millions; and it was believed to support about 400,000 persons. Yet, our silks were higher priced than those of France, and generally considered not so good. It was the

Edinburgh Review, xliii. p. 79.

Second Report of
Lords' Committee,
p. 39.

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fashion among the ladies to prefer French silks; and so great was the encouragement given to smuggling through this fancy, that the English manufacturers found it answer well to send their fabrics to sea, to have them landed as smuggled goods: and the ladies were perfectly happy, as long as they knew nothing of the device, and could admire and show their dresses as Lyons manufacture,—so far superior to anything that could be produced at home! If the French silks were then really superior to the English, while cheaper, the time was coming when they would be neither better nor cheaper; for the day was at hand when that freedom of competition was to be allowed which is the true stimulus to improvement, and when the reduction of duties on various articles used in the silk manufacture would permit a lowering of the price of the fabric. As soon as Mr. Robinson and Mr. Huskisson came into office, the principal silk manufacturers in and around London presented a petition in favour of the removal of restrictions on the manufacture, which enabled Mr. Huskisson to plead that “the trade had been the first to suggest the removal of these restrictions; and he was confident they would be nearly the first to rejoice at their removal.” The petitioners declare, that “this important manufacture, though recently considerably extended, is still depressed below its natural level by laws which prevent it from attaining that degree of prosperity which, under more favourable circumstances, it would acquire. Taking into account the unlimited supply of silk with which we might be furnished from our East India possessions, our indefinite command of capital, and the unrivalled skill and industry of our artisans, your petitioners hesitate not to express their conviction that, by judicious arrangements, our silk manufacture might be placed in a condition ultimately to triumph over all foreign competition, and that silk, like cotton, may be made one of the staple commodities of the country.” While some few of the multitude engaged in the silk manufacture were wise enough to wish for freedom in both directions, the greater number were urgent for the repeal of duties on the materials employed, but clamorous against the importation of manufactured silks, and against any great reduction of the duties on the organzine, or prepared silk. It was no easy matter for the Minister to determine his course among the various parties. The proprietors of silk-mills remonstrated against the admission of foreign organzine; and Mr. Buxton presented “a petition from 23,000 journeyman silk-weavers of the metropolis, praying that the prohibition of the importation of foreign wrought silks might not be removed.” The Members of the House could with difficulty make their way in through the crowds of pale-faced operatives, who filled all the passages, and who watched every countenance with the wistfulness of men who are trying to read their fate. In the House, the galleries were filled with manufacturers, who occasionally burst into loud exclamations of joy or dismay, as the Minister gratified or disappointed them. At the conclusion of Mr. Huskisson’s speech, however, they echoed the cheers of the House by a loud clapping; a token of satisfaction which was thought to be occasioned by the least wise part of the proposed measures:—that which extended the existing duty on wrought silks over the next two years and a quarter.

The duties on raw silk were immediately reduced to 3*d.* per lb. from 5*s.* 7½*d.* on all that did not come from Bengal, and 4*s.* on all that did. The risk was thought too great of making a corresponding reduction of the duties on thrown

Huskisson's
Speeches, ii 238.

Hansard, x. 803.

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silk; and they were therefore reduced less than one-half—from 14s. 8d. to 7s. 6d. per lb. The prohibition against the importation of foreign silks was to continue up to July, 1826, when they were to be admitted at an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. By this latter provision it was expected that time would be given for preparation for the change, and for smoothing the transition. But it was found so injurious in its working, by the uncertainty, slackness of sales, and derangement of demand that it caused, that the Minister avowed this to be the one great error of this scheme, and men of business learned from the case of the silk manufacturers now, that far less mischief is done by a prompt than a lingering change, when alterations in commercial policy have to be made. Mr. Huskisson was so far free from the responsibility of the injurious delay, that he declared “in his own opinion, the time which had been granted was not at all called for, but he had ceded it in deference to the feelings of the parties interested, and with a view to conciliate, as much as possible, those who thought their interests might suffer by the measure.” It is amusing now to see one reason alleged for the delay of the change. “We hope we shall have time to get out of the trade before the storm arrives.” As for the poor weavers, who could not “get out of the trade,” their tone was very humble. They “thanked the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the postponement of the day of their destruction till 1826, and prayed that it might be further postponed till 1829.” The Bill passed the Commons on the 25th of March, and the Lords on the 21st of May.

Hansard, x. 870.

Hansard, x. 1221.

Hansard, x. 1312.

Hansard, xi. 793.

And what happened, when this day of destruction arrived? The poor weavers who had been, from their first aggregation as a body, subject to periodical famine, when the hand of charity was regularly invoked, to lead them back from death's door,—how was it with them now, when they were awaiting a worse crisis than any they had known? What a blessed relief it must have been to these thousands who had been kept in a state of nervous apprehension for above two years, to find their manufacture growing brisker from month to month, and their children better fed and clothed after the year 1826 than they had been for a long time before! In the year 1826 itself there was depression: but it was in consequence of the crash of the banks at that time, as is proved by the steady advance which took place in 1827, and continued till, in 1829, it was found that the silk manufacture was then twice as extensive as in 1821, 1822, and 1823, and still progressive. Our machinery and our taste improved, and with them the fabric and patterns and colours of our manufactured silks, till it was clear to unprejudiced eyes that the English silks had become superior to the French. In ten years from the passing of the Bill, and in eight years from the admission of French silks, we were exporting silk goods to France, to the value of £60,346 in the year. New mills were erected, and the manufacture spread gradually from district to district, calling more and more thousands into employment. A voice of distress was still heard from Coventry, while London, Manchester, and Paisley were relieved and satisfied. This was because the Coventry people liked their own old ways better than new ones. They would not hear of power-looms, except from those who complained of power-looms, and proposed to put them down. The Member for Coventry, Mr. Ellice, pleaded their cause in the House on the 23rd of February, 1826, in his compassion for their inability to compete with

Porter, soc. ii. c. 2.

COVENTRY WEAVERS.

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Hansard, xiv. 744.

the Swiss and French ribbon-weavers, when the fabrics of the latter should be introduced in July of the same year. He said, "the superiority of the French and Swiss looms has been ascertained beyond all doubt. . . . Much has been done within the last two years in introducing improvements; and time and encouragement are alone wanting to give confidence for further application of capital to this most important object. One workman can produce, with the improved engine-loom lately adopted, six times the quantity of ribbon he could have before manufactured in his common single-hand-loom: and it is a melancholy consideration, and one eminently deserving the serious attention of the House and his Majesty's Government, that fully three-fourths of the looms still in use in Coventry, to which place this manufacture is almost entirely confined, are of an inefficient description, and by far the greater part of them the property, and it is sadly to be feared the only property, of the operative weavers themselves."

These last considerations are very sad; and so they were felt to be by the House: but when it was proposed to decree protection to the Coventry weavers on these grounds, the House decided against it,—by a vote of 222 to 40 against the appointment of a Committee to consider of it. It was clear that instead of countenancing a preservation of the antiquated and bad methods of weaving ribbons by special protection, every facility should be afforded for improving the manufacture by competition with the most able foreigners. As it was clearly impossible to bring back the Swiss and French workmen to the use of expensive methods, and to prevent their command of the markets by their superiority, the only thing to be done was to emulate that superiority, so as to meet them fairly in the markets of the world. This method has completely answered in the case of all the other kinds of silk-manufacture: and if the Coventry operatives continued to suffer after those of Macclesfield and Manchester had begun their new career of prosperity, it was not from the removal of protection, under which they had sunk to their impoverished state, but to their own deficiency of knowledge and skill. There was nothing in their isolated case to shake the confidence of the Minister when he said, "Whether

Hansard, xiv. 808.

in a public station or in retirement, my greatest happiness will be to feel assured that the power and resources of this country have been increased by those measures of commercial policy, which it has fallen to my lot to submit to parliament. That such will be their ultimate result is my firm and conscientious conviction." Within three years of the utterance of these words, it was proved that the power and resources of the country had been increased by the doubling of the silk manufacture, and all the collateral advantages pertaining to such an increase. It was against this benefactor of his country, and all who acted upon his views, that a Member of the House, on that same night, quoted, in his horror of "theory," the saying of Mr. Burke, that "a perfect metaphysician, unbending and hard-hearted, exceeded the devil in point of malignity, and contempt for the welfare of mankind." This is a striking lesson on the operation of prejudice;—a subject on which there are few men who have not something to learn.

Hansard, xiv. 763.

REDUCTION OF
WOOL DUTY.

The case of the woollen manufacture, which received a similar boon this year, was somewhat different from that of silk. No duty was ever laid on wool till 1803; and then it amounted to little more than a $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb. The duty never

exceeded 1*d.* per lb. till 1819, when Mr. Vansittart most imprudently increased it to 6*d.* per lb. The trade had not been prosperous for some time before; and this increase of duty aggravated the mischief suddenly and greatly. The decline in the export of woollens in the very first year after the imposition of the duty was not less than one-fourth. It was to retrace the steps taken, to repair, if possible, the mischief done, that Mr. Huskisson now, after five years' trial of the augmented duty, reverted to the former plan. Foreign wool imported for English consumption of the value of 1*s.* per lb. and upwards was to pay a duty of 1*d.* per lb.: and wool of an inferior quality was to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* per lb. The novelty of the scheme was that English wool-growers were now permitted to export wool, on payment of a duty of 1*d.* per lb.

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Before this time, the state of the case was this. The agriculturists would have liked that the manufacturers should be allowed to have no wool but theirs: and what they desired was a high duty on the wool that was brought in, while they themselves should be allowed to export wool freely; selling it abroad or at home, wherever they could get the best price for it. This, of course, was not considered a reasonable demand.—The manufacturers, on their part, wished that the exportation of British wool should be prohibited, while they begged for a free importation. In behalf of this free importation they alleged, and with truth, that British wool is of only limited use by itself. It is good for making carpets, baizes, flannels, blankets, and other coarse fabrics: but it will not make fine broad cloth, unless mixed with foreign wool. This was an excellent argument for the free introduction of foreign wool; but there was nothing to be said for the desired restriction on the British wool-grower. When Mr. Huskisson proposed to relieve both classes by permitting wool to come in and go out on payment of a duty of 1*d.* per lb. each way, he was assailed with complaints and abuse from both parties, who were more alarmed by the benefit offered to their adversaries (as they called each other) than pleased at the advantage given to themselves. The Minister had further to sustain the abuse of the large number of persons who, in their horror of “theory” and “abstract notions,” forgot that he was reverting to a rate of duty which had existed only five years before. However, he knew what he was about. He knew that the unimpeded importation of foreign wool is absolutely necessary to the very existence of the most important part of the manufacture in England, which cannot proceed without it. He knew that the importation would sustain the price of British wools by enabling some kinds to be profitably worked up, which could not be otherwise used to advantage. He was well aware that much ground had been lost in foreign markets by the injurious policy of the preceding five years, by which the price of wool had been raised at home and lowered abroad, thus giving to Continental manufacturers a great advantage in the markets. But he felt it to be his duty to try whether the lost ground could not be regained; and he went forward with his project through all the clamour.

Hansard, x. 329.

It was, indeed, full late to set about retracing our steps. The foreigners were before us everywhere. As for the home demand, cottons were now largely superseding the woollen fabrics, which had been made artificially dear. This was the complaint of the manufacturers.—The lowness of the price of wool, of which the growers complained, was partly owing to the slackness of the demand for woollen

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goods just alluded to; partly to the much increased number of sheep in the country, and the greater weight of the fleece; and partly to the deterioration in the quality of the wool, which takes place when sheep are managed more with a view to their mutton than their fleece. Looking at these considerations, and remembering that the exportation of wool constantly declined during the five years of the high import duty, it is clear that the English woolgrower owed no gratitude to Mr. Vansittart, and no grudge to Mr. Huskisson. The latter gentleman gave the following account in February, 1826, of the result of his experiment, as far as concerned the export and import of wool.

Huskisson's
Speeches, ii. 485.

"Instead of our manufactures being ruined—instead of the fulfilment of the assurances, that all the British wool would be exported, to the utter destruction of our manufactures, and that from their destruction the foreign wool would no longer be wanted in this country—what has been the real effect of this measure? Why, that since the removal of the restrictions on the export, we have sent abroad the amazing quantity of 100,000 lbs. weight of British wool; while, of foreign wool, we have imported no less a quantity than 40,000,000 lbs. weight. This, sir, is not speculation. It is practice and result against speculation. We removed the restrictive and prohibitory duties, and the consequences were, that we exported, comparatively, none of native growth,—because we had a better market for it at home."—The price of wool continued so low, however, that two years after this, a Committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inquire into the causes. These have been evident in the course of our narrative; and it only remains to show what were the exports of manufactured woollens. In the five years of the heavy import duty, the average annual shipments amounted to 1,064,441 pieces. In the five years after the removal of the restrictions, the average annual shipment was 1,228,239 pieces: and in the next five years the average rose to 1,505,993 pieces. It is alleged by the discontented, that the value of our exports of woollens has not increased since the beginning of the century: and this is true. But it must be remembered how far the value sank, and had to rise again: and also that, owing to the lowered price of wool (the grower being compensated by his mutton), and the economical improvements in the manufacture, a much greater number of people are employed in the process, and accommodated with the produce, for the same money value which was employed for a smaller number at the beginning of the century.

Porter, sec. ii. c. 2.

REDUCTION OF
DUTIES AND
BOUNTIES.

There was this year a reduction of the duties on coals and rum, and a repeal of the duties on law proceedings, and of various bounties which were useless, and therefore injurious. There was also a conversion of four per cent. stock into three-and-a-half, which procured an annual saving to the country of £375,000. The effects of the Peace upon the purse began to be tangible.

Annual Register,
1824, p. 88.
UNIFORMITY OF
WEIGHTS AND
MEASURES.

An important enactment of this session was one which established a uniformity of Weights and Measures. In pursuance of a recommendation of a Commission appointed by the Crown, weights and measures were settled by natural standards, while the old denominations were retained. This difficult subject, which much needed attention, had been taken in hand by six men of science, appointed as a commission in 1819, who issued a Report in the same year. The Commons' Committee on the subject in 1821, considered their Report; and two years after, a Bill for the regulation of Weights and Measures

Hansard, x. 450.

was brought in ; but it was not carried till the next year. There was reason for these delays ; important as it was, as a practical matter, affecting the interests of the whole of society, from the masters of science to the humblest purchaser at the village shop, that measurements and weights should be true and uniform. As was observed by Dr. Kelly, one of the witnesses before the Committee—
 “ Nature seems to refuse invariable standards ; for, as science advances, difficulties are found to multiply, or, at least, they become more perceptible, and some appear insuperable.” Till we know all about the level of the sea, and the effects upon the pendulum of every kind of attraction, with other particulars of natural knowledge which remain to be ascertained, we cannot have a perfect system of weights and measures. Meantime, scientific men are busy, all over the civilized world, in making researches ; and governments must do the best they can in setting up improved standards in the footsteps of science, as was done in England by the establishment of the new imperial measures on the 1st of May, 1825.—It is one of the beneficial results of Peace, that the masters of science can, without impediment, unite in their processes of research, and compare results as they are obtained.

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Penny Cyclopædia,
 ART. STANDARD.

The session of 1824 closed, on the 25th of June, with a Speech delivered by the King in person. It was a cheerful speech, free from all regretful allusions, except as to the disturbed state of Ireland, and declaratory of peace with the world abroad, and the advancing prosperity of every interest at home.

CLOSE OF SESSION.

CHAPTER VIII.

1824.

SPECULATION, 1824.

WE now enter upon a chapter of modern English history which the moralist regards, and will, for a century to come, regard with wonder and shame. It shows how childish the mind of a nation can be; as crises of another kind show how brave and noble it can be, according to the appeal made to its lower or its higher faculties. The same people who had been calm and courageous when their national existence appeared to be in peril, magnanimous and disinterested when the partition of European territory was going on abroad after the peace, staunch and loyal in the cause of a persecuted Queen, and well-principled in liberty when a new course of foreign policy was entered upon, were now to prove themselves very children under the temptation of sudden prosperity, amidst extraordinary facilities for gambling.—It was not altogether rapacity which instigated the follies of 1824 and 1825. Too many were eager for gain,—making haste to be rich: and of these the sharpeners of society made an easy prey: but with many more, the charm was in the excitement,—in the pleasure of sympathy in large enterprises,—in the rousing of the faculties of imagination and conception, when their field of commerce extended over the Pampas and the Andes, and beyond the farthest seas, and among the ice-rocks of the poles. When the grey-haired merchant grew eloquent by his fireside about the clefts of the Cordillera, where the precious metals glitter to the miner's torch, it was not his expected gains alone that fired his eye, and quickened his utterance; but that gratification of his conceptive faculty to which his ordinary life had ministered but too little. When the professional man perilled his savings to cut through the isthmus of Panama, he gloried in helping on a mighty work; and described, like a poet, the pouring of the one vast ocean into the other, and the procession of the merchant-ships of the world riding through on the new-made current. And so with the aged ladies and retired servants, who gave from their pittance of property and income whatever they could squeeze out, to hold shares in steam-ovens, steam-laundries, or milk and egg companies;—they had their visions of domestic comfort and luxury, and looked joyfully for the time when the good things of the table and the wardrobe should abound, with little expense of toil. Now was the time for those who make their market of the unwary to come forth and be busy. Needy speculators and scheming attorneys, and gamblers of every class used their opportunity, first for exciting the gambling spirit everywhere within their reach, and then for introducing themselves into a society where at other times they could have obtained no admittance. They knew that their opportunity was short; and they used it diligently. Seasons of speculation and reaction may be observed in the history of every nation, and may be expected to recur till nations have grown much wiser than they are: but such a spectacle of

intoxication and collapse as is offered by the years 1824—1826 will hardly, we may hope, be equalled again in England.

Among the records of the time, we have the following picture of the state of society, in its material aspect, amidst which the fever of speculation arose.

Quarterly Review, xxxii. p. 189.

“The increased wealth of the middle classes is so obvious, that we can neither walk the fields, visit the shops, nor examine the workshops and store-houses, without being deeply impressed with the changes which a few years have produced. We see the fields better cultivated, the barns and stack-yards more fully stored, the horses, cows, and sheep more abundant and in better condition, and all the implements of husbandry improved in their order, their construction, and their value. In the cities, towns, and villages, we find shops more numerous and better in their appearance, and the several goods more separated from each other; a division that is the infallible token of increased sales. We see the accumulation of wares of every kind adapted to the purses, the wants, and even the whims of every description of customers. This vast increase of goods, thus universally dispersed, is an indication and exhibition of flourishing circumstances. It may be traced into all the manufactures, and observed in the masses of raw materials in each, in commodities of every kind in their several stages of preparation, and in all the subdivisions of those stages, by which not only the increase of wealth is manifested, but the modes by which it is acquired are practically illustrated. If we could ascend a little higher, and examine the accounts of the bankers in the metropolis, and in the provincial towns, small as well as large, we should find that the balances of money resting with them, ready to embrace favourable changes in the price of any commodity, or to be placed at interest as beneficial securities present themselves, are increased to an enormous amount. This indeed may be fairly inferred from the low rate of interest in the floating public securities, from the prices of the funds, from the avidity with which every project for the employment of capital is grasped at, and from the general complaint, almost the only complaint heard, that there is now no way of making interest of money. The projects for constructing tunnels, railroads, canals, or bridges, and the eagerness with which they are embraced, are all proofs of that accumulation from savings which the intermediate ranks of society have, by patience and perseverance, been enabled to form. The natural effect of this advancement in possessions has been an advance in the enjoyments which those possessions can administer; and we need not be surprised at the general diffusion of those gratifications which were formerly called luxuries, but which, from their familiarity, we now describe by the softened, and exclusively English term, comforts. This is manifested in our houses, in their finishing, in their decorations, and especially in the numerous conveniences with which they are stored. The merchants of London forty or fifty years since lived in the dark lanes in which their counting-houses are still to be found, ate with their clerks a hasty meal at two o'clock, and returned to the desk to write their letters, by which they were often occupied till midnight. The shopkeepers lived behind their shops, their best floor was let to lodgers, and few only of the wealthier of them could afford a retreat from the bustle and the cares of the city to the surrounding villages of Islington, Hackney, or Camberwell. The watering-places which have sprung up on the whole coast of

1824.

1824.

Kent and Sussex were then unknown to those classes of traders who now, by occasionally resorting to them, and spending there a part of what they can spare from their annual savings, contribute largely to maintain the inhabitants in comfort and respectability. If we visit the country, we experience the same pleasing emotions as are communicated on the contemplation of the increased enjoyments of the city. We do not see indeed among the farmers such great strides, but we see universal advancement. The profits on their capitals are necessarily lower, and their growth consequently less rapid; but in the last forty or fifty years they, too, have made considerable progress. Whilst they have exchanged the work of the hands for that of the head, they have exchanged also the round frock of the ploughman for garments more suitable to their improved condition. Their houses are more commodious and better furnished; carpets, china plates, and glasses are to be seen, instead of stone floors, trenchers, and drinking-horns. Their wives and daughters, upon whom the refinement of society mainly depends, are generally better educated, and are able to attract their husbands and brothers from the fairs and the markets at an earlier hour, and with less frequent breaches of the rules of sobriety than were practised in the last generation. The country inn is no longer superior in neatness or comfort to the farmer's own house. Among the manufacturers, we see some with princely yet well-merited fortunes. But there is a numerous class inferior to them, who have amassed, and are amassing, considerable wealth, and dispensing employment to thousands of their poorer neighbours. We have had occasion before to notice the increased population of Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and several other places which have been the scenes of their operations. Forty years ago, we were well acquainted with those places, with the fortunes which were then enjoyed, and the habits then prevailing. On recent visits, after a long absence, we felt a degree of astonishment which we cannot describe, at the changes which have taken place. We do not speak of the numerous individuals, whose fathers or grandfathers had, almost within recollection, hardly emerged from the condition of day labourers, and whom we now found the owners of magnificent establishments; for single instances prove little in a case like this; but we allude to the immense addition to the buildings, the improvement in their construction, and the general advance which the owners had made in all the liberal tastes and enjoyments of life."

Such was the buoyant tone of the time. Such was the record,—much of which was to merge into silent dismay, the gazette, and the obituary.

Early in the spring of 1824, gold and silver were exported to South America: yet nobody appeared to observe that there was too much money abroad. In June and July, there was a decided fall in the exchanges with the continent: yet no one seemed to take the alarm. The Bank of England went on increasing its issues through the whole of 1824, and for three months of the next year: and it was not till the end of that time, in the spring of 1825, that even sagacious men of business began audibly to prophesy the evil to come. At that time, some few declared their belief that a terrible revulsion might be looked for soon. But it was then too late. Between June 1824 and October 1825, from ten to twelve millions of coin and bullion were exported; and during the greater part of that time the Bank of England was still put-

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ting out its notes ; and the provincial banks issued as many as they could, till the country was deluged with paper money. Many a man set up for a banker who would, at another time, have as soon thought of setting up for a king. Lord Liverpool complained, after the crisis, of the system which allows any petty tradesman, any cobbler, or cheesemonger, to usurp the royal prerogative, and to issue money without check or control. There was a perfect mania of competition in making paper issues. Many of the country bankers, who afterwards failed, discounted the paper that was brought to them by the wildest and wickedest speculators, and paid a large commission to persons who undertook to promote the circulation of their notes.

This inordinate supply of money followed upon a deficiency of currency in 1821 and 1822 ; in which latter year an Act was passed permitting the circulation of small notes beyond the date originally fixed. This extension of time tempted the bankers to increase their issues, instead of providing for the withdrawal of some of their paper. In 1825, there was from 30 to 40 per cent. more paper out than in 1822. Just at that time, the Bank of England, followed by other banks, lowered the rate of interest. Thus there was money in abundance which its owners did not know what to do with. The rate of interest was low. Prices had been so low for two years that they were sure to rise, suddenly and vastly, while so much money was abroad ; and the opportunity for speculating was one which few men of enterprise, engaged in trade, were able to resist.

It would have been well if the rage for speculation had been confined to men engaged in trade. The madness spread everywhere. Retired professional men, living on their acquired fortunes, ladies deriving all their income from the funds, families who had lent their money on mortgages, looked at the low interest on money on the one hand, and the enormous profits made by speculation on the other, and grew dissatisfied. Hundreds who had before been content with their moderate incomes, and had blessed God that their lot had lain between poverty and riches, now watched with jealousy the opportunities of their neighbours ; were offended if shares in some joint stock company were not offered to them, or sighed if obliged to admit that they were not rich enough to pledge themselves to a series of calls. Some who went on in their ordinary course, untouched by the madness of the time, were reproached for injustice to their families, in declining to help themselves from the stores of wealth which were poured out all around. These were justified in the end : but they suffered, more or less, with the rest : for this is a case in which the suffering can never be confined to those who err. The scheming attorneys, the needy speculators, the excitable professional men and ladies, and the ignorant small capitalists whom they led astray were the sinners : but many an honourable and sagacious merchant, who saw whither things were tending, and did his utmost to preserve himself and his neighbours, was half ruined, or wholly ruined, by the consequences of other people's folly. He, like others, suffered by the stoppage of the banks, the sudden contraction of the currency, and the prodigious depreciation of every kind of stock.

While the rate of interest was lowest, the possessors of capital were easily tempted to invest their money in some scheme which should yield them an abundant return. While the rate of interest was lowest, men were tempted

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COMPANIES.

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to borrow larger sums than they would otherwise have ventured on, wherewith to carry on their speculations. And, again, this was the time, when bankers were willing to discount bills at very long dates, for speculators to buy up goods, hold them back for the high prices expected to ensue, and thus enhance the prices yet further by creating an artificial scarcity. At the very time when even reasonable people were discontented with the low interest they obtained for their money, while threatened with high prices to come, they saw their neighbours making fortunes almost in a day, by skilful buying and selling among the projects afloat. A young lady, whose brother had encouraged her to take a share of £100 in some joint-stock project, might pay her first instalment of £5 with some trembling, and wonder when the next call would come. But if her brother brought her £40 in a few days, with the news that he had sold out for her while the premium was thus high, would she sit down content with having for once gained £35 by her £5? Would she not be as eager to invest again as the managers could be that she should? Thus it was with many thousands of ladies, and gentlemen as inexperienced as they. Some selfish wretches knew well enough what must happen, and only wanted to get rich before the crash,—to use the madness while it might serve their turn. The greater number were seduced into the gambling game: but all, guilty, thoughtless, and innocent together, suffered more or less under the inevitable retribution.

1825.

As for what the speculation was like, it can hardly be recorded, even at this day, on the open page of history, without a blush. Besides the joint-stock companies who undertook baking, washing, baths, life-assurance, brewing, coal-portage, wool-growing, and the like, there was such a rage for steam-navigation, canals, and railroads, that, in the session of 1825, 438 petitions for private bills were presented, and 286 private acts were passed. Part of the retribution of the national folly lay in the decline of the character of the House of Commons, too many of whose members acted, in regard to these bills, with a recklessness which subjected them to a suspicion that they, like others, had forgotten themselves, and had sacrificed their legislative conscience to the interests of themselves and their friends. The acknowledgment of the independence of some of the South American States at this time turned the stream of speculation in that direction. Companies were formed to obtain gold and silver from mountain tops and clefts, where there were no workmen or tools to do the work, no fuel for the fires, and no roads or carriages to bring away the produce. There were to be pearls from the coast of Columbia; and such precious articles were to come from the other hemisphere, that sober persons began to fear too great a change in the affairs and the mind of the English people. There would be so much gold and silver, that, after the Chancellor of the Exchequer had paid off the National Debt, the value of money in England and all Europe would be essentially changed. Gems and pearls were to abound to such a degree that the jewels of ancient families were soon to be shamed. The higher orders began to look about them, when these things were said; and, finding that the middle and lower classes were to become very rich in a short time, they too rushed into the scramble for the wealth of South America. It is on record that a single share of the Real del

Annual Register.
1825, p. 121.

Quarterly Review, xxxi. p. 352.

Monte mine, on which £70 had been paid, yielded £2,000 per cent., having risen speedily to a premium of £1,400 per share.

1825.

People who declined the grosser kind of gambling,—by Stock Exchange speculations,—attached themselves to the idea of growing rich by trading with the new markets opened on the other side of the Atlantic. At Rio Janeiro more Manchester goods arrived in a few weeks than had been before required for twenty years: and merchandise (much of it perishable) was left exposed on the beach, among thieves and under variable weather, till the over-crowded warehouses could afford room for its stowage. It is positively declared, that warming-pans from Birmingham were among the articles exposed under the burning sun of that sky; and that skates from Sheffield were offered for sale to a people who had never heard of ice. China and cut glass were, in some places, pressed upon the natives, as preferable to the cocoa-nut shells and cow-horns, which had hitherto been their dishes and drinking vessels. A work of the time, written by a lively observer of things on the spot, gives an idea which may be exaggerated, but which must have some truth in it, of how these South American projects were set on foot, and carried out.

Head's "Rough Notes," &c., pp. 303, 304.

"We had all sorts of English speculations in South America, some of which were really amusing. Besides many brother companies which I met with at Buenos Ayres, I found a sister association of milk-maids. It had suddenly occurred to some of the younger sons of John Bull, that, as there were a number of beautiful cows in the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, a quantity of good pasture, and as the people of Buenos Ayres had no butter to their bread, a Churning Company would answer admirably; and before the idea was many months old, a cargo of Scotch milk-maids were lying becalmed under the line, on their passage to make butter at Buenos Ayres."—When arrived, "the difficulties they had to contend with were very great. Instead of leaning their heads against patient domestic animals, they were introduced to a set of lawless wild creatures, who looked so fierce that no young woman who ever sat upon a three-legged stool could dare to approach, much less to milk them. But the Guachos attacked the cows, tied their legs with strips of hide, and as soon as they became quiet, the shops of Buenos Ayres were literally full of butter. But now for the sad moral of the story. After the difficulties had been all conquered, it was discovered, first, that the butter would not keep; and secondly, that, somehow or other, the Guachos and natives of Buenos Ayres—liked oil better!"—This gentleman was himself a victim of the spirit of the time. He went out as manager of one of the mining associations; left two cargoes of English and German miners at Buenos Ayres, and rode on to explore, galloping a thousand miles here, and twelve hundred miles there, in search of a fit spot to which to transport his miners. He found, as others did, that between fraud and folly, there was no hope, and there had never been any solid ground for speculation to build on. Some of the Germans wished to remain in the country: the whole of the rest, English and Germans, returned without having gone into the interior at all; and the company was dissolved, with a loss of at least £50,000. These are mere single specimens of a folly and rashness which were the epidemic of the time. The reaction was not long in coming.

Quarterly Review, xxxv. 117.

On the 6th of July, 1825, the Lord Chancellor read the King's Speech, dis-

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Hansard, xiii. 1488.

COLLAPSE.

missing the Parliament for the session. The speech avowed that the "general and increasing prosperity on which his Majesty had the happiness of congratulating" his Parliament at the opening of the session, continue "to pervade every part of the kingdom." Yet there were a good many people in the kingdom who were in a very different state of spirits about this prosperity from that which they had been in at the opening of the session. In the early spring, the funds had begun to decline; and soon the prices of almost all commodities were lowered. Cotton, wine, silk, and other foreign products came into the market in such vast quantities that it must be long before they could be sold off; and their prices fell incessantly, both from the superabundance, and from the eagerness of the holders to sell. No returns came in from the great speculations in foreign countries;—no gold and silver from the Andes; no profits from the butter of the Pampas; no tolls from the canal which was to unite the Atlantic and Pacific; no pearls from the coast of Columbia. Again, a multitude of traders had exhausted their credit in obtaining capital which they had locked up in enterprises extending far into the future: and their immediate want of money was pressing. Without it they could not await the release of the capital they had locked up. They importuned the bankers for further advances: but the bankers were as much hampered as anybody: they had been tempted some months before, by the abundance of money, and the low rate of interest, to discount bills of extremely long dates, and to lend accommodation on securities of which they could make no use, in the present state of the market. Just at this most critical time, the Bank of England began to draw in. Her issues had been profuse when money was too plentiful, and gold was rapidly leaving the country. Now, when money was wanted in abundance to rescue commercial credit on all hands, she began to be stiff about discounting, and to contract her issues. Panic first, and then despair were the consequence. Every man seemed ready to seize his debtor by the throat, and say, "Pay me that thou owest." The hilarity and openness of heart and hand which had made England such a sunny place a year ago, were gone; and instead, there was now the suspicion with which every man regarded his debtor and his creditor; the daily dread of the post; the eager glance at the Gazette; the walking out to await the mail; the laying down of pony-carriage and new footman; the giving up the visit to the sea, and the subscription to the book-club and concert; and even, too often, the humbling inquiry of servants, whether they could wait awhile for their wages. The manufacturer looked round on his overloaded shelves, and for every thousand pounds' worth of goods now reckoned five hundred. The widow lady and her daughters, who had paid ready money all their lives, now found themselves without income for half a year together, and could not enjoy a meal, because the butcher's and baker's bills were running on. The dying man who could not wait for better days, altered his will with a sigh, lessening his children's portions by one-half or two-thirds. Young lovers, who were to have had a jocund wedding this autumn, looked in one another's faces, and saw that it must not be thought of at present.—But worse was to come.

PANIC.

Here and there, the failure of a commercial house was announced. First, the failures were of houses which nobody supposed to be very stable: but presently, one firm after another stopped payment;—one known to possess enor-

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mous landed estates ; another to be the proprietor of rich mines ; a third to have great wealth fixed or afloat, in foreign lands. In these cases, the same story was always told ; that it was merely a temporary embarrassment, and that the firms possessed property far exceeding in value their entire liabilities. But so many of these embarrassments occurred, each spreading disorder over its own range of influence, that it presently became doubtful what any kind of property was really worth, for any practical purpose.—Then, of course, came the turn of the banks,—the securities they held for their vast and rash advances having become, for the time, little better than waste paper.—In a country town, one market-day, the aspect of the market-place was very unlike its wont. The country people were leaving their stalls, and collecting in groups, while some made haste to pack up their produce, and put to their horses, and hie home as if they expected to be robbed if they stayed. Here, a man passed with a gloomy face, and a bank-note clutched in his hand : there, a woman wrung her hands, and wept : and an actual wail, of many voices, was heard amidst the hubbub of the place. The bank of the district had stopped payment. The hopeful went about telling all they met that it was only for a time, and that everybody would be paid at last : the desponding said that now it had begun, there was no saying where it would stop, and that everybody would be ruined ; and neither the hopeful nor the desponding could suggest anything to be done. Buying and selling came almost to a stand ; for the country people looked at every kind of bank-note as if it would burn their fingers, and thought they would rather go home than sell anything at all. Before going home, however, all who had money in any bank ran to get it out. The run upon the banks spread from district to district ; and very soon, to London. Lombard-street was full of men of business, standing about, waiting to hear the disasters of the day, or of persons, even of great wealth, who were hastening to their bankers, to draw out their deposits. It was a time which tried the faith, and courage, and generosity of the rich. Some did not trouble their bankers by any kind of application : and some few drove up in their carriages, and carried away heavy bags of gold—with or without apparent shame. On the 5th of December, the news spread with the speed of the wind, that the banking-house of Sir Peter Pole and Company had stopped. This must occasion many failures in the provinces, as this firm had accounts with forty-four country banks. The funds went down immediately ; and faster still next day, when the bank of Williams and Company stopped. From this time, the crash went on without intermission, till, in five or six weeks, from sixty to seventy banks had stopped payment.

Annual Register,
1825, p. 123.

CRASH.

The question now was, how to get money to go on with from day to day : a question which involved that of the very life of the working classes through the winter. There seemed to be nothing before millions of them but absolute starvation, unless commerce could be set a-going again, more or less. If they could not earn, they must starve ; for even those of them who had some property could not sell. The pawnbrokers' houses were crammed from the rafters to the door-steps, till they would not hold one article more : and if they had, the pawnbrokers had no money, any more than other people. It was a touching thing to those who had acquaintance among the poor, to see, that winter, the bride-housewife, who had lately looked forward to a marriage of substantial

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comfort, polishing up her new furniture, or looking for something to mend in her own or her husband's new clothes, while the faces of both were wan with hunger. It was touching to see how long the pride of the decent dressmaker, and the skilled weaver and his wife, leaning faint against their idle loom, stood out against the charity soup and loaf,—declaring, even till it became no longer true, that they could point out some neighbours who would be glad of tickets, but that, for themselves, they could not say they had ever wanted bread. These things were seen and heard from street to street of every town, throughout that winter, even after Government and generous-hearted capitalists had done all that could be done to stop the derangement of the national affairs.

ISSUE OF SMALL
NOTES AND COIN.

Annual Register,
1825, p. 124.

On the failure of Pole and Co.'s bank, meetings of the Cabinet took place, and went on with unusual frequency, till the disorder began to subside. Ten days after the stoppage of Pole's bank, an issue was made of one and two pound bank-notes for country circulation: and the Mint was set to work to coin sovereigns as fast as its machinery would go. For above a week the coinage amounted to 150,000 sovereigns per day.—At the same time, the most influential and secure men of business in London and in the great towns held meetings, where they adopted resolutions pointing to the support of commercial credit. This show of confidence, and the somewhat increased supply of money, raised the spirits and allayed the panic of society: and by the end of the year,—the year which had opened so brilliantly!—the nation began to think it might, one way or another, struggle through; resolving, with the desperate earnestness natural at such crises, if it once got out of this scrape, never to fall into such an one again;—a resolution which, in this case as in that of an individual sinner, lasted only till the next season of strong temptation.

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The first days of the new year were, however, dark enough. Though the banks no longer broke by the half-dozen a day, the crash was not over. Here and there, one which had struggled on, and hoped to get through, was obliged to give up at last; and on every such occasion, there was a spread of distress through the district. Still, there was no employment for the poor, except such as was created for them: and some of the Lancashire operatives rose, to destroy the machinery which they supposed to be the cause of the glut in the markets. The shipowners charged the same fact upon the relaxation of the Navigation Laws, and clamoured accordingly. On the whole, however, the patience and fortitude shown by the most suffering parties were as remarkable as the rashness and selfishness of the speculators who had plunged them into their misery.

KING'S SPEECH.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 2.

It was the business of Parliament to see what it could, and what it could not do, in such cases as the present:—how much of the mischief was occasioned by bad, or could be prevented by good laws: and how much was independent of legislative action altogether. This inquiry was recommended in the King's Speech, delivered by commission on the 2nd of February: and both Houses began to debate the matter at once.

Hansard, xiv. 17.

Some few members of each House were eager to bring forward their favourite topics, in connection with the prevalent distress, which was, indeed, large enough to hang every political idea upon: but the greater number were anxious to hear what the Ministers had to say, in explanation of the past, and proposal for the future.—Lord Liverpool stated the fact, that the issue of paper by

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country banks was more than double in 1825 what it had been in 1823. During the years 1821, 1822, and 1823, the value of notes stamped for country bankers had been, on an average, a little above four millions. In 1824 it had reached six millions; and in 1825 it exceeded eight millions. The Bank of England was at the same time augmenting its issues, though less remarkably. It was now to be proposed by Government, to prohibit the circulation of £1 and £2 notes, after a certain period; and next, to negotiate with the Bank of England for an alteration of the terms of its privileges. The Charter of the Bank was not to expire till 1833; but it was proposed to induce the Directors to establish Branch Banks in the commercial centres of the provinces, and to permit an extension of the powers of the private banks, whose firms had hitherto not been permitted to consist of more than six partners.—The same explanations were made in the other House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A difficulty occurred at once in regard to the suppression of small notes. If a day was fixed by law, after which no more small notes should be stamped, there was evidence in the hands of Government to show that such an amount would be stamped in the interim as would render the law altogether nugatory. The Government, therefore, stopped the stamping process immediately, though many bankers had paid for their licenses to issue notes up to the next 10th of October. Of course, the Ministers were called to account for this high-handed proceeding,—this “unconstitutional exercise of power,”—this “violation of a statutory guarantee.” They admitted the justice of these descriptive terms; acknowledged that an Act of Indemnity might be required, and pleaded in their defence, the urgent necessity of the case. After a little complaint and remonstrance, the Government heard no more of the matter,—the state of the commercial world being such as to make the most vigilant politicians less scrupulous than usual about “statutory guarantees” being strictly observed. It was a question of an act like that of blowing up a private house, without leave asked, to stop a conflagration. Any thing was better than running the risk of a deluge of small note paper in the year to come, like that of the year that was gone. Lord Liverpool and the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that in 1825 the amount of small country note paper had not been less than six millions. Since the crash, it had been reduced to four millions; the vacancy having been supplied by coin: and now there was no reason to expect that there would be any difficulty in replacing the other four millions by coin: a measure most desirable for the benefit of the poorer classes, who, as the principal holders of small notes, were always the first to suffer, while the least able to bear the suffering, from such a crisis as had just taken place. In some essential points of the discussion, almost all the members of both Houses agreed:—that the present question was in fact of a metallic currency at all, as it was invariably found that, under an unrestricted small note currency, gold and silver were driven out of circulation by an equal amount of paper,—Lancashire, where no small notes existed, being the only part of the country which had hitherto had a metallic circulation at all; and the coin, which had been issued with great expense and trouble, being sent back to London by return of the mail which had carried it down:—that the present was the time for the restriction to be made,—the work being, as Mr. Brougham observed, already half done by

ARRANGEMENTS
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Hansard, xiv. 17, 49.

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the panic and crash :—and that the present was the moment for another reason, —the severe test which had been just applied to the stability of the country banks which had stood the shock, and which could therefore easily stand the gradual withdrawal of the outstanding notes. The opposition, led by Mr. Baring, numbered only 39 votes against 222 ; and when the opinion of the majority was thus decisively declared, the minority abstained from further objection.

Hansard, xiv. 354.

Some needless difficulty arose, from the imprudent conduct of certain of the country bankers, who withdrew their small notes from circulation too hastily, allowing no time for the new metallic currency to supply their place. In some districts this created great difficulty about carrying on the smaller transactions of commerce. To meet it, an enactment was proposed, and passed by a large majority, by which the Bank of England was enabled to continue stamping small notes during the interval till the 10th of October. This liberty did not affect the term fixed for the circulation of small notes ; and the enlarged power of preparation of notes for that term was sure not to be abused ; for the Bank of England found its small note circulation a pure inconvenience. The purpose of the enactment was merely to enable the Bank to furnish a small currency in particular districts, where it might be urgently wanted during the period of change, when the country bankers were drawing in their £1 and £2 notes.

Hansard, xiv. 611.

One of the strangest arguments brought against the new measures, was by Lord Carnarvon in the Upper House. He gravely urged, that with a return to a metallic currency, highwaymen would again come out upon the roads. At a time within his recollection, before the common use of small notes, “a friend of his had been robbed on the highway ; another had been wounded by a shot fired at him by a footpad ; and a third had narrowly escaped with his life, by seizing the muzzle of the pistol which the robber had thrust into his carriage, and wresting it out of his hand.” This objection was easily met by proofs of the extent of thefts, even on the high road, of bank notes ; and of the great amount of the easy crime of forgery.—Lord Carnarvon probably derived his plea from the celebrated “ Letters of Malachi Malagrowther,” as Sir Walter Scott chose to style himself. In these Letters, which pleaded against the abolition of the small note currency of Scotland, the author drew pictures of the probable robberies of bankers’ chests in the Highland glens.

Hansard, xiv. 1351.

SCOTCH BANKS.

The prohibition of the small note currency was not made to extend to Scotland. The banking system of Scotland had all along been essentially different from that of England. Its firms had been under no limitation with regard to the number of partners ; and banking was carried on by large companies of capitalists, under a system which admitted the commercial world to a much fuller knowledge of the affairs of the banks than is thought of in England, or would there be compatible with the practices of commerce. Small banking firms in Scotland must, therefore, consist of men known to be wealthy and trustworthy : and their responsibility in issuing small notes is understood to be complete. During the crash of 1825 and 1826, not a single Scotch bank failed ; and there was, evidently, no need to interfere with a system which worked so well in its own locality,—however inapplicable it might be elsewhere.

After much negotiation between the Government and the Bank of England, the further changes introduced into the English banking system were these. The Bank established Branches in many of the large trading towns; a measure which has proved highly useful.—Banking firms might henceforth include any number of partners, except within sixty-five miles of London. These changes, with the suppression of small notes, would, it was hoped, obviate much of the danger of insecure banking, from which the country had suffered so grievously.

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BRANCH AND
JOINT STOCK
BANKS.

As for the relief that should be given on the instant to the commercial world,—the Ministers were unwilling to authorize an issue of Exchequer bills; because they thought the remedy a fallacious one under the circumstances: but they offered to bear the Bank harmless through a purchase of Exchequer bills to the amount of two millions. The Bank did not stir: nor did it meet favourably the Government proposition that it should make advances on deposits of goods. But affairs pressed: times were not mending: the merchants of London and the large provincial towns were growing desperate: the Government was called, even in parliament, hard and cruel. Something must be done to revive confidence, and bring out the hoarded gold which was above everything wanted. It was no longer possible to refuse what the general opinion required: and before February was out, the Bank had agreed to make advances on deposits of merchants' goods. A great pawning transaction was entered upon; the advances of the Bank being limited to three millions. Commissioners were appointed to conduct the business in the principal trading districts. It was presently found that many of these commissioners would have little or nothing to do. As soon as it was found that the money could be had, it appeared that little of it would be wanted. The restoration of credit was the thing required. On the strength of this new resource, men of high commercial character began to trust one another. The example spread; and in a short time the alarm subsided, and fair and prudent trading began to revive.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 38.
ADVANCES ON
GOODS.

Good as were the consequences of this arrangement, the Government had the judgment and sympathy of the best men in the country with them in their unwillingness to have recourse to it. The Prime Minister declared in his place his serious objection to inducing merchants to look anywhere for aid in commercial difficulties, but to themselves and the banks of the country; and that "nothing justified the interference of the Government in mercantile embarrassments, unless the distress was occasioned by some great public calamity inflicted by the hand of God, or some political event of a very extraordinary nature." Their position was a very hard one: one so hard that it must be hoped that no government may ever again be made to suffer in like manner by the folly and cupidity of the society they have to govern. First, the Ministers had to witness large preparations for the failure of their own wisest policy; preparations with which they had no right or power to interfere. Before the admission of foreign silks, there was such a rage for building silk-mills, each costing from £10,000 to £15,000, that many of them stood still unroofed at the close of the panic and crash. In 1825, the population of Macclesfield amounted to about 20,000: and in the newspapers of February of that year may be seen advertisements to "Overseers, Guardians of the Poor, and Families desirous of settling in Macclesfield. Wanted immediately, from four to five

POSITION OF MI
NISTERS

Hansard, xiv. 871

Huskisson's
Speeches, ii. 504.

1826.

thousand persons, from seven to twenty years of age, to be employed in the throwing and manufacturing of silk." Again: "Wanted to be built immediately, one thousand houses." This was only a single example of those speculations

Hansard, xiv. 320.

which, to use Mr. Canning's words, "at the time, fixed the public gaze, and so immediately excited their appetency, as to cover the nation, in the eyes of foreign states, if not with disgrace, at least with ridicule. The most wild and incoherent schemes were started; projects which sprang with the dawn, and expired before the setting of the sun, in whose beams they glittered for a few hours, and then fell; a puff of vapour sent them soaring towards the skies; the puncture of a pin brought them to the earth." In the midst of the intoxication the Government uttered warnings, strenuously and incessantly, but in vain: and because these warnings were in vain, those who uttered them were blamed for not having put forth the strong hand, to restrain the madness of the nation. "I really do not know, Sir," declared Mr. Canning, "what legislative interference could possibly effect in such a case. I do not know how a measure could be framed, to deal with those speculations of unreasoning avarice which would not, at the same time, have borne so hard on honest industry and rational enterprise, that it would have been likely to do more harm than good. The inordinate appetite for gain, if left to itself, could not fail to work its own cure, through its own certain disappointment." And then, when the meteor schemes had all exploded, and left nothing behind but darkness and stifling odours, the sufferers who refused timely warnings would have it that the Ministers might make the sun rise, and bring wholesome breezes if they would; and taxed them with obstinacy and hard-heartedness. If they would issue Exchequer bills, or do this and that which none but a despotic government would think of doing, all might be well in a moment. "It is most unfair," said Mr. Canning, "to infer from any hesitation on the part of Government to adopt any particular remedy, under such circumstances, that there exists, therefore, on their part, an insensibility to the extent or nature of the existing evil. For myself and for my colleagues, I totally disdain to answer such insinuations. I impute to no man who now hears me, that he is insensible; but, Sir, for others to impute it to those upon whom, every day and every night, care and anxiety are brought by the consideration of those distresses, in addition to the common sympathy in which they share as men, is to impute to them, not only a want of feeling, but a want of sense, which would unfit them, not merely for the situations which they fill in the government of the country, but to appear here, in the midst of those whom I have the honour of now addressing."

Hansard, xiv. 320.

Hansard, xiv. 725.

Such was the share which the Government had to endure of the pain of the crisis; the foreboding,—the heavy heart in a time of delirious joy; the haunting care which cast its cold shadow by day, and sat on the pillow at night; the inability to ward off the mischief, and the discredit of it when it came; the strain put upon their principles; and the reproach cast upon their steadfastness:—such was their share of the suffering of the time. But if they suffered more than the careless, they suffered less than the guilty. There were many hundreds, many thousands in the country who might well envy them their very cares. Perhaps even they, with all their means of knowledge, amidst all the press of evil tidings which rushed in from day to day, could not be so well

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aware as those in an humbler station, of the worst miseries of the time. They had their Gazette under their eyes, and the clamour of the commercial world in their ears: they had before them the diminishing returns of the taxes, and the increasing returns of pauperism: but they were saved the anguish of witnessing the individual traits which most wring the heart in a season of national calamity. It is not he who sees from afar the cloud of dust from an earthquake, and who faintly hears the murmur of confused sounds, and who knows that so many churches, and so many dwellings, and even so many people have perished, that can feel the deepest horror of the scene. It is rather he who, in some narrow street, meets the spectacle of the writhing of a crushed sufferer here, a childless mother there, a surviving lover, a forlorn infant wailing among ruins and flames, who has the best understanding of what has befallen. And so it was with this social convulsion in England. There are some now of the most comfortable middle-class order, who cannot think of that year without bitter pain. They saw many parents grow white-haired in a week's time: lovers parted on the eve of marriage: light-hearted girls sent forth from the shelter of home to learn to endure the destiny of the governess or the sempstress: governesses, too old for a new station, going actually into the workhouse: rural gentry quitting their lands; and whole families relinquishing every prospect in life, and standing as bare under the storm as Lear and his strange comrades on the heath. They saw something even worse than all this. They saw the ties of family honour and harmony snapped by the strain of cupidity first, and discontent afterwards, and the members falling off from one another as enemies. They saw the hope of the innocent, the faith of the pious, the charity of the generous, the integrity of the trusted, giving way. They saw the most guilty rewarded, and the most virtuous involved as deeply as any in the retribution. But it would be an endless task to adduce the sorrows of that time: nor can their issue ever be recognized. After a weary and dreary season of suspense, affairs began to mend; but so heavily, that even the King's speech, which is understood to make the best of everything at all times, declared in the next November, that the depression had abated more slowly than his Majesty had thought himself warranted in anticipating. Still, the depression did pass away. Our ships were once more abroad upon the sea; and the clack of the loom and the roar of the forge were again heard in our towns. But the heart-wounds of such a time can no more be healed than the whitened hair can resume its colour. The impoverished might grow rich, and many a laden mind might throw off its cares: but the estranged could not be reunited: the dishonoured could not be reinstated: the grave could not give back the broken-hearted, nor prosperity reassure some who had suffered too fearfully. To a few who were strong enough, this adversity may, like other discipline, have ministered increased strength: "to him that hath much shall more be given:" but the strong are everywhere the few; and in this case their lot is only the single ray in the dark place,—the strong tower which outstood the earthquake.

Hansard, xvi. 11.

Men are wont to talk glibly of commercial crises when they are past; in a tone quite different from that in which they speak of a pestilence or a famine. In this case, it can hardly be so,—the calamity was so fearful, the folly so humbling, and the guilt now so clear. There is a certain Scripture text about

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the temptations and destruction of those "that would be rich," which must have haunted many a man's mind, and rung in his ears, like a judicial sentence, after the season of passionate cupidity was past. To the more disengaged mind of the guiltless observer, the whole crisis must have been a significant text, from which he could preach eloquently the great truth, how little governments can do for the welfare of nations in the absence or abeyance of individual virtue and intelligence; how necessary it is that men should rule their own spirits before they can enjoy that social welfare which a wise government may help to secure, but can never confer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE history of 1825 and 1826 has shown us the state of English capitalists; the rapacity and ignorance of some, and the consequent sufferings of all. How was it with the labourers, among whom it is natural to look for a worse cupidity, a deeper ignorance, and a fiercer suffering?

1825.

From the time when the false prosperity of the country began to decline, there was much rioting. The first impulse of sufferers too ignorant to know the causes of their suffering, is to rebel against the order of things under which their misery takes place. The first serious rioting was at Sunderland, in August, 1825, just after the tide of prosperity was seen to have turned. The association of seamen, who were not on good terms with the shipowners, saw a collier quietly leaving the port manned by strangers, and went out to attack the vessel. The principal shipowners, who had been sworn in as special constables, put off after them, but could make but little resistance against overwhelming numbers; the rioters being at least four hundred. The shipowners, and all the obnoxious crew except the master and the mate, were thrown into the sea; whence they were picked up in no condition for further fight. A party of dragoons were brought up, and the Riot Act was read; but on the opposite side of the river from that where the proceedings of the rioters had collected a mob of men, women, and children. Some stones were thrown from the midst of this mob, who had not heard the reading of the Riot Act. The soldiers fired, and five persons were killed; one of whom was a carpenter, at work on his stage, and another a labourer returning from the field. The funeral of the victims was solemn, with banners and flags, and a band of singers; and for mourners, twelve hundred seamen, with each a crape round the left arm, walking hand in hand, two and two. The circumstances had, however, been too fatal for the courage of the men; and they yielded the points for which they had struck.

RIOTS.

AT SUNDERLAND.

Annual Register,
1825, Chron. 119.

A more successful stand against authority and law was made in the Isle of Man, the next November, when the island was kept in a state of uproar for a week, by the resistance of the poor to the collection of the tithe of potatoes by the proctors of the bishop. The people overturned the laden carts, stood guard over the potatoes, pursued the bishop's proctors, rescued such of their own body as were apprehended, defied the constables, evaded the magistrates and military, and obtained from the bishop, at the end of a week, the following written declaration, which was delivered by his lordship himself into the hands of a deputation from the malcontents: "Whereas it has been reported by evil-minded persons, that a tithe of potatoes will be taken from the poor tenants of this island, and from persons little able to pay the same:—They are hereby assured that such tithe will not be demanded from them, either this

IN THE ISLE OF
MAN.Annual Register,
1825, Chron. 158.

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year or at any future time." These poor people needed only the assurance that their potatoes should not be taken from their children to be given to the church: and the bishop saw that it would be little for the advantage of religion to give the food of the poor to the church. So there was grace on the one side, and cheering on the other; and the affair was over for the time.

IN LANCASHIRE.

By the spring of the next year, 1826, there was such fearful suffering among the poor of the manufacturing districts, that no one could wonder much at the spirit of violence which broke out in Lancashire. The people rose up against the power-looms, which they believed to be the cause of their distress; and in one day, every power-loom in Blackburn, and within six miles of it, was destroyed. It is worthy of note, that the rioters took the utmost care not to injure any spinning machinery. Time was, when the hand-spinners were as much exasperated against spinning-jennies as the hand-loom weavers now were against power-looms. They had discovered the value of the spinning machinery by this time, but could not be persuaded that they should ever derive any benefit from weaving-machinery. It was a mournful spectacle in Lancashire, that week in April; the mob going from town to town, from factory to factory, snatching their food from bakers' shops and public houses; throwing stones at the soldiers, and being shot down rather than give up their object, believing sincerely that their very lives depended on the destruction of these looms: leaping from two-story windows to escape the soldiery, after having cut up every web, and hewn down every beam and stick within; striking at their pursuers with table-knives made into pikes; with scythes and sledge-hammers; swimming canals,—hiding in woods,—parading the streets of towns, to the number of 10,000 at a time, frightening the night with cries of hunger, and yells of rage:—all this was terrible; but it came at the end of many months of such sore distress as rouses the fiercest passions of men. On the first day, three persons were killed by the soldiers: on another day, nine: here, it might be seen that wounded men were carried away across the fields: there, the street was found, when emptied, to be "much stained with blood." Here, a poor creature was loading his rusty gun with marbles, while the manufacturers were bringing up cannon to plant round their factories:—there, haggard men were setting buildings on fire, and snatching buckets from the hands of those who would have supplied water to the engines. Between Monday morning and Saturday night a thousand power-looms were destroyed. The immediate money value of this machinery was £30,000; but it had a greater value as the only means of bread of a large number of people who were now left idle and destitute.

Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 68.

IN YORKSHIRE.

Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 72.

In the first week in May, the Manchester operatives rose again: and then the Bradford wool-combers and weavers met to consider "the present unparalleled distress and famishing condition of the operatives," and could think of no way of mending it but by breaking windows. There were inquests first: and trials afterwards; but no relief. In Lanarkshire, the noblemen, magistracy and gentry of the county, assembled to consult upon the wretched and helpless state of the Glasgow operatives, knew no better than to throw the blame on the invention of machinery. In Dublin, the starving silk-weavers formed in procession, to exhibit their hunger in the streets. Their idea of a remedy was, that the public subscription raised for them should be applied in

Annual Register,
1826, p. 49.

the purchase of the manufacturers' stocks; and thus, when the shelves were cleared, they thought a new demand must at once ensue. At Trowbridge, the people were dismayed at a rise in the price of potatoes in May, and would have it that the gardeners and greengrocers were hoarding the potatoes. On market day, they attacked the gardeners' stalls so vigorously, that by eleven o'clock not a vegetable was left in the place. The frightened butchers removed: the soldiers came: window-breaking went on all night: a prisoner was released by unroofing the prison; and two more were sent off to Salisbury, for trial at the assizes. At Carlisle, the starving weavers mobbed one of the candidates for the city, clamouring for a repeal of the Corn Laws and radical reform; and a riot ensued, in which a woman standing at her own door, with a key in her hand, and a little girl in the street, were shot through the head. The inquests in these cases were not ceremonies tending to tranquillize the exasperated. In the iron districts, there were strikes, and readings of the Riot Act, and a scouring of the country by soldiery. In Bethnal Green, the thieves of the metropolis congregated, and robbed everybody in the name of the distressed weavers. In Norfolk, the unemployed weavers, who would not take work at the wages which the manufacturers could afford, kept watch at the city gates for goods brought in from the country. They destroyed one cart-load in the street, and threw the cart into the river; broke the manufacturers' windows; cooped in a public house three men from the country who had silk canes about them; and kept the magistracy busy and alarmed for some weeks. About 12,000 weavers in Norwich were then unemployed, and the whole city in a state of depression, the more harassing from its contrast with the activity and high hope of the preceding year.

While these scenes of disorder and wretchedness were witnessed from end to end of the kingdom, the Ministers adhered to the principle on which they had refused to issue Exchequer Bills, and declined to purchase popularity by the offer of any apparent assistance, while convinced that they could afford none that was real and effectual. They were confident that the mischief must work its own cure, and could not be cured in any other way. Yet, something might be done to relieve the despair of the starving, who saw large stores of wheat laid up in bond in Liverpool, Hull, and other ports, while the prospects of the harvest were very doubtful, and parliament was about to be dissolved, leaving the people without advocacy to the care of the government for an interval of months before the new parliament could assemble. The Ministers and Parliament had agreed, early in the session, that it would be improper to bring forward the whole question of the Corn Laws while the country was in a state of high excitement, and on the eve of a general election. But it was thought by Ministers that the 300,000 quarters of corn in bond in the ports might be let out without tampering with the great question, and without doing any appreciable injury to the agricultural interest; while the manufacturers declared that even the small imports of foreign corn which would follow upon such a measure would afford just the stimulus to their business that was wanted. They were ready to resume business if they could obtain any returns from abroad of the only commodity which their foreign customers could at present send with advantage. It was decided, after eager and protracted discussions, that the people should have the prospect of a supply of food,

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AT TROWBRIDGE.
Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 76.

AT CARLISLE.

Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 94.

IN STAFFORD-
SHIRE.

IN NORFOLK.

LETTING OUT
BONDED CORN.
Hansard, xv. 795.

1826.

OPENING THE
PORTS.

under arrangements which met the objections of both the parties who were constantly opposed to each other on all branches of the question of the Corn Laws. The manufacturers were to be gratified by the letting out of bond of the 300,000 quarters already in the ports: and the agricultural interest obtained the point that no prices and amounts of duty should be fixed in relation to the further supply of 500,000 quarters which the Ministers were authorized to import, if necessary, within the space of two months. The responsibility in regard to the prices and duties was thrown wholly upon the Ministers by the agriculturists, lest any fixing of these by parliament should be made a precedent in any future action for the repeal of the Corn Laws. This period of two months was short; and the amount of 500,000 quarters was less than half of the largest previous importation: so that the arrangement was not so formidable but that the landed interest were brought to agree to it, under the extreme pressure of the times, while the manufacturers were thankful for even this slight relaxation of the laws to which they were willing to ascribe almost the whole of their distresses. The opposition to both bills was strong in the House of Lords; but the Premier made an earnest appeal to them in view of a possible scarcity of food during the recess, following upon all the recent disasters which had afflicted the country; and at last, both bills passed their Lordships' House on the 26th of May.

Hansard, xv. 339.

The object of the Ministers, real and avowed, in urging these bills, was to obtain a constitutional permission to do that which they might otherwise be compelled to do without authority, and on the chance of procuring indemnity when the new parliament should meet. They foresaw that they should be compelled to open the ports, during the recess, whether they obtained leave beforehand or not: and of course they were extremely anxious for such authorization. But after all, it did not answer their purpose. The hot summer of 1826 is well remembered. It was not very unfavourable to wheat, of which there was about an average crop. But the barley crop was far below the average: and at one time it appeared as if there would be no oats or pulse at all. Oats are generally highest in June, when the preceding year's crop is coming to an end. This year, oats were 22s. 11d. in the middle of June; and the price went on rising, instead of falling, through July and August, till, on the 1st of September it had risen to 30s. There was so little grass that the cattle were fed on dry fodder on the richest meadow lands in England, which were brown and burnt as if a fire had passed over them. The deer in noblemen's parks died of drought: ponds and reservoirs were shrunk to muddy pools: hard-working people sat up all night to watch the springs,—some to carry home drink to their children,—others to have a commodity of cold water to sell in the morning. In some high-lying towns, the richest people made presents to one another of little pitchers of fresh water; and the consumption of beer increased much among those who were disgusted with the warm and stagnant water yielded by the brooks when the wells were all dry. All the accounts from the north of Europe told of a rise in the price of oats and pulse, like that at home; and this increased the alarm. By the 1st of September, the importation price was passed: but before the ports could be opened, the average must be struck of the price above the importation price; and the first average would not be struck till the 15th of November. The Ministers

ALARM OF
SCARCITY.Annual Register,
1826, p. 173.

decided not to wait for the quarterly average, but to issue an order in Council at once for the admission of oats, rye, beans and pease. What was in bond was brought into the market immediately: and the fresh imports were subjected to additional duties, to be confirmed by parliament when it should meet. Thus, after all, Ministers were reduced to forestall the action of parliament, and to seek an act of indemnity for themselves. Such a necessity was not without its good results. It tended, like every perplexity and irregularity of the kind, to disgust sensible people with that system of restriction on food which was to be put an end to by a member of the administration of that time.

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Annual Register,
1826, p. 174.

The miserable are always restless. Hunger roams from land to land, as pain tosses on the bed it cannot leave. The famished and cold cannot sit still on the bare ground while there is life within them, and a capacity of hope which points to food and warmth which may be had elsewhere. The poor Irish, with their wistful looks and their tatters, are poured out upon the coasts of England and Scotland every year: and when they are too many for the existing work and food, or when the work and food fall short from other causes, the grave and decent poor of England and Scotland wander away too, shipping themselves off westwards, or to our furthest settlements in the east. The subject of Emigration must, sooner or later, become one of interest and importance to every civilized state; and soonest to an insular kingdom. It may be theoretically a question whether, if the English nation had been altogether wise,—had assumed the conduct of its own civilization, instead of being the subject, and in some sense the victim, of its own civilization,—the time would have yet arrived for sending abroad any of its people. It may be a question whether, if we were all wise and of one mind about social affairs, there is not enough for every one to do and to enjoy on his native soil. This is a theoretical question now, which may become a practical one any day; and the sooner the better. But it has, for a course of years now, been a prominent question how best to arrange matters for the needy among our people, who will and must roam, because they have no food for their little ones, and no home for their own hearts. The restlessness which forces upon us the question of Emigration is of course greatest in seasons of adversity: and in the adversity of the year 1826 it was fierce enough to originate what may prove to be an important period in our national history.

EMIGRATION.

In 1825, it was announced to the country that the business of the Colonial Office had so increased of late years, that it had become necessary to have an additional Under Secretary of State. Mr. R. Wilmot Horton was the existing Under Secretary; and Mr. R. W. Hay was now appointed in addition. It may be well that a future time should see what amount of business was apportioned to our Colonial Secretaries in 1825, when Emigration, in the modern import of the word, first began seriously to engage the attention of society. It is still our way to approve of our Colonial Minister as we approve of Ministers for home offices, on account of his general character and qualifications, without much regard to his capacity for a function requiring a special and elaborate training. It is still our way to permit our Colonial Minister to go out and come in at short intervals, as if the stability of the administration were not of the highest importance, when his administration extends over various and

Annual Register,
1825, Chron. 116.

COLONIAL OFFICE.

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distant countries. It is still too probable that a Colonial Minister's first business is to shut himself up in his study, and find out on the globe where the territories lie which he has to set about governing. But we are beginning to learn how absurd it is to expect the machinery of the Colonial Office to do the necessary work; to understand the growing magnitude of the business of colonization, and to be prepared for a reconstitution and prodigious enlargement of the office which is to superintend it. When this impending change is made, men will look back with astonishment on this list furnished in 1825, of the Colonies whose affairs at head-quarters had to be managed by Mr. Wilmot Horton and Mr. Hay.

Mr. R. Wilmot Horton:—Jamaica, Barbadoes, St. Christopher, Nevis and Tortola, Antigua and Montserrat, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, Trinidad, Demerara and Essequibo, Berbice, Honduras, Bahamas, Bermuda, Lower Canada, Upper Canada, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, Newfoundland. Commission of Inquiry and Criminal Justice, West Indies; and Apprenticed Africans.

Mr. Hay:—Gibraltar, Malta, Ionian Isles, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Missions to the Interior of Africa, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Cape of Good Hope, Heligoland, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, Ceylon, Mauritius, East Indies. Commission of Inquiry, Cape, Mauritius, and Ceylon: Sierra Leone.

The work of assisting Emigration was henceforth to be looked forward to by the Colonial Office as a part of its business. Since 1822, Government had given occasional aid to Emigration to Canada: and now it heard on every side of expectations from individuals and societies that it would assist in conveying the needy to new fields of labour. The landowners of a Scotch county applied to Ministers for encouragement to their poor to emigrate: and the working men formed themselves into societies, in many parts of the country, whose object was to obtain funds for Emigration from rich neighbours and from the Government. Government was compelled to deliberate on this important subject. It would not do to go on giving sums of money here and there, without inquiring what was done with it. It was not right to continue supplying grants without knowing how the former schemes had issued. It was not possible to keep at home the poor creatures, rendered desperate by want, who were resolved to try their fortunes abroad; and it was cruel to let them go wholly unprepared and destitute. It became known, by this time, how piteous was the lot of the emigrant when he found himself among the snows of Canada, with the remnant of his family about him,—the few whom hardship and fever and the miseries of the voyage had spared,—and no possessions whatever but the axe on his shoulder and the tatters they wore. It became known how the Irish who flock to the United States are naturally regarded as a nuisance in their ports: and how they die in the swamps, digging canals which the Americans will not work at, and crouching in shanties which no American would enter,—unless it were the missionary and the priest. Society had not yet awakened to the perception of what Emigration ought to be; had not yet admitted the conception of a small, complete society, removed with all needful appliances to a new scene where it would be bound together as at home by its mutual wants and aids; by its capital and its labour; its church,

its schools, its gradations of ranks and employments, and sufficient powers of self-government. Such a conception as this had not yet entered the mind of the government or of the nation: but all were aware that the desperate and random Emigration of the time was bad, and must give place to something better.

1826.

On the 14th of March, 1826, Mr. R. Wilmot Horton moved, "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the expediency of encouraging Emigration from the United Kingdom." He detailed the circumstances of the experiments of the years 1823 and 1825, when, first, 268 persons emigrated from Ireland to Canada at the expense of £22 each; and next, 2024 persons followed at an expense of £20 each. It had never been the intention of Government to go on making grants for the removal of paupers in this mode: but it was thought that the issue of these first attempts was sufficiently favourable to indicate further inquiry and consideration. As the scheme was advocated on the ground of its being a successful method of removing paupers, it was opposed as an expensive and fruitless remedy for pauperism, as the numbers removed could never perceptibly reduce the superabundance of labour at home. The wider considerations of the benefits of calling new regions into fertility, and of creating new markets, and thus feeding and employing many who remained behind; the considerations of the proper ages of those who were to go; of their mutual apportionment and co-operation as capitalists and labourers; of the means of making Emigration presently self-supporting and expansive: these points were not yet discussed, because they were not yet thought of. The great subject which was soon to become a science was as yet treated superficially, partially, and empirically. But a beginning was made. The Committee asked for was appointed; and it presented its Report and Evidence before the dissolution of Parliament, with a recommendation that the subject should be pursued without loss of time.

EMIGRATION COM-
MITTEE
Hansard, xiv. 1360.

Hansard, xvi. 231.

It was a disastrous year,—this year 1826: but if we have seen what miseries marked its progress, we have witnessed too the birth of a great redeeming blessing. It is possible that from the woes and the terror and the clamour of that fearful season may have sprung the fertilization and peopling of vast new regions abroad, and the redemption of future generations at home.

CHAPTER X.

1825.

CATHOLIC QUESTION.

THE year 1825 was marked by nothing more conspicuously than by a great change in the aspect and conduct of the Catholic question. In a preceding page of this History, a promise was given of a brief narrative of this great question : and here, at the beginning of its final stage, we seem to be at the right point for a rapid review of its history.

The difficulty of most or all perilous political questions lies in the relation they bear to the long distant past : a past which did not involve social principles that have since become of primary importance, and by whose rule the matter must be finally disposed of. For long before the present date, there had been an incessant and unmanageable confusion in the general mind of the anti-Catholic party between the religious and political mischiefs of admitting the Catholics to an equality of civil rights with the Protestants : and this confusion itself was modern, compared with the sufferings of the Catholics. This was because the sufferings of the Catholics began in an age when there was no distinction between civil and religious rights. When the distinction rose into recognition, the Romanists were actively persecuted, sometimes on the religious, and sometimes on the political ground : and when the persecution became negative, and therefore confined to the political ground, their enemies had still not arrived at any clearness of thought, or any common agreement, as to the basis of their opposition to the Catholic claims. This is illustrated by the whole course of the history of those claims.

REVIEW OF THE QUESTION ; 1535.

The Reformation is, of course, the point from which the separate story of the Catholic body must date. When Henry VIII., by his emissaries, demolished the holy shrine of St. Kieran, and turned out its relics into the street, and burned the costly crozier of St. Patrick, he did not persecute the Irish Catholics as Irish, but as Catholics : but his acts had the immediate effect of uniting in a general hostility to England the chiefs and tribes who were before incessantly at feud with each other. Nobody then thought of the distinction which grew up in a subsequent age. There was so little call for a religious reformation in Ireland, that we have it on good authority that there were not sixty Protestants in the island when Elizabeth became queen. During her "vigorous rule" in Ireland, she and her ministers made no nice distinctions between her functions of head of the Church and head of the State, in the penal laws decreed against the Irish Catholics, and the legalized force by which she put down the Irish malcontents. In spite of the talk of the reformed religion in both countries, and the laws against the exercise of the Catholic religion, the conflicting parties were evidently full of political matters, and not of religious. The English government employed Catholic officials in the most important and confidential services in Ireland ; even, if they belonged to the Pale, in repelling the Spanish invasions which took place on account of her

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anti-Catholic laws and policy. The Catholics of the Pale fought against those out of the Pale; and in the reign of James I., as a fierce Catholic, O'Sullivan, tells us, "the eyes even of the English Irish" (the Catholics of the Pale) "were opened, and they cursed their former folly for helping the heretic." Elizabeth's wars were waged against the chiefs of savages: chiefs whose tribes knew nothing of tillage, of homes, of property, or comforts; who, in the remoter parts of the island, went almost unclothed, and lay down round fires to sleep on the ground. These chiefs had lands to be robbed of. "There will be lands for those who want," said Queen Elizabeth, by way of stirring up her officials, when there were tidings that O'Neal was about to rise: and it would, no doubt, have been exactly the same,—the whole course of her conquest of the rebels, whatever had been their religion, of all that existed, from pole to pole. Meantime, her Protestant church of sixty members did not expand to her wish, though she gave bounties to it, and proscribed its enemies. When it did expand, it was not from conversions in Ireland, but by the accession of the colonists of her successor, and the settlement of the soldiers of Cromwell.

The confusion which arose after the incursion of these new dwellers gave rise to the Act of Settlement, by which 7,800,000 acres of land were transferred from Irish Catholic to English Protestant proprietors. At the first possible moment,—that is, during the brief season when James II. held up his head in Ireland,—the native parliament, in which only six Protestants sat, repealed the Act of Settlement, against the will of the king. The battle of the Boyne presently overthrew whatever had been done: and it is not to be wondered at that the Popery laws which succeeded were excessively severe. Though they said a great deal about religious error, they were imposed in dread of a political foe, whose physical force was truly formidable. "The Protestant ascendancy of Ireland," says the *Edinburgh Review* of Sir J. Throckmorton's work on the Catholic question, "cared very little about purgatory and the seven sacraments. They acted upon principles simply political; and their severity was not derived from polemical rancour, but from the two great springs of bitterness, which turn the milk of human nature into gall:—revenge and fear. They knew what the vanquished had done in the hour of success; they looked at their numbers with dread, and sought to strengthen the barriers of law against the rude arm of physical power. The system of the Popery laws, indeed, in Ireland must be looked at as a whole. In their present state (1806) they are folly, caprice, feeble and petulant tyranny. As they stood originally, they were vigorous and consistent; the firm, well-riveted fetters of conquest, locking into one another, and stretching down the captive giant to the floor."

1659

Edinburgh Review, viii. p. 313.

More forfeitures ensued as soon as King William had driven out his enemy. The estates transferred on this occasion are declared to have covered 1,060,793 acres. The one circumstance which softened their political adversity to the Irish was that by the treaty of Limerick, framed when the struggle was over, the free exercise of their religion was secured to them for the future, on the strength of the King's guarantee for himself, his heirs and successors, as far as in him lay. By the words of the treaty it was expressly declared, that "the Roman Catholics should enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of

1691.

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Charles II.; and their Majesties, as soon as they can summon a parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in that particular as may preserve them from any disturbance on account of their religion." These articles, afterwards published in letters patent under the Great Seal, were signed by the English general on the 3rd of October, 1691: and for three weeks the Irish Romanists were hopeful and happy. But it was only for three weeks: and then followed a season of oppression so cruel as to provoke the question how it could have been borne, in an age of the world so advanced. Of the English government of that time, Burke says, "the severe and jealous policy of a conqueror in the crude settlement of his new acquisition, was strangely made a permanent rule for its future government." And of the oppressed party, Swift declared that it was "just as inconsiderable in point of power as the women and children." In this weakness lay their strength. It was nourishing the germ of that future Catholic Question which was soon to begin disturbing cabinets, and with more and more power, till, a century after, it should be looked upon with constant dread as the explosive force which was to shatter one administration after another for five-and-thirty years together, and threaten at last to revolutionize the empire. Little did the government of Queen Anne foresee the consequences of setting its heel on the neck of the Catholic interest: but, though it could not foreknow how it would perplex and destroy a succession of administrations, and craze the feeble brain of a sovereign, and invite invasion again and again, it might have remembered how dangerous it is to sink individuals, and, yet more, whole classes so low, that they can fall no lower, and will therefore make desperate efforts to raise themselves. They might have taken to heart Swift's words; "General calamities, without hopes of redress, are allowed to be the great uniters of mankind; since nature hath instructed even a brood of goslings to stick together, while the kite is hovering over their heads. It is certain that a firm union in any country where every man wishes the same thing with relation to the public, may, in several points of the greatest importance, in some measure supply the defect of power; and even of those rights which are the natural and undoubted inheritance of mankind."

TREATY OF LIMERICK.

On the 3rd of October, 1691, as we have said, the treaty of Limerick, including provisions favourable to the Catholics, was signed. On the 22nd of the same month, the English parliament decreed that Irish members of both Houses should take the oaths of supremacy: an enactment which excluded Catholics from both the Irish houses of parliament. King William forgot his pledge to recommend the liberties of the Catholics to the attention of parliament. Three years after that pledge was given, and when nothing had been done to redeem it, a set of enactments was passed which left the Romanists in such a condition that the wonder is that they did not spring at the throats of their oppressors, and peril every thing for a savage revenge. All Catholics were disarmed, and the priests banished:—that much might have been borne: but the whole body were deprived of all means of educating their children; and were prohibited from being the guardians, not only of other people's children, but of their own. As this was endured, other privations followed in 1704. Every son who would turn Protestant, might now succeed to the family estate, which was stringently secured to him. A boy of ten years old, or younger, might thus dispossess his

REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE; 1704.

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family, if he declared himself a Protestant. A Catholic could no longer purchase land, or enjoy a long lease, or make more than a certain income by his land, or marry a Protestant, or take his place in a line of entail, or hold any office, civil or military, or vote at elections, or, except under certain conditions, dwell in Limerick or Galway. Five years after, more penalties were added; and again in the next reign. Any son of a Catholic might bring his father into Chancery, force him to declare on oath the value of his property, and to settle such an allowance upon the family informer as the court should decree, not only for the fathers's life, but the son's. This was a zeal for religion indeed, which could slight morality, and set up a new commandment in the place of the old one, which enjoins honour to father and mother. Catholics keeping schools were to be prosecuted as convicts; and Papists were bound to furnish Protestant watchmen for the towns, and horses for the militia. Any priest celebrating marriage between a Papist and a Protestant was to be hanged. No Catholics were to enter the profession of the law; and any lawyer marrying a Catholic was to be held a Papist. If it makes the heart sick now to read these things, done little more than a century ago, and done in the name of the religion professed by both parties, what must it have been to have endured them! What must have been the interior of Catholic households in those days! If the blessing of education had been left them, we might understand their patience: and we can but hope that circumstances were to them an education sufficient for their needs: for the children did not rise against their parents; nor the oppressed against their oppressors. There was no rebellion during the series of years which added weight to the oppression with every new parliament. These Catholic households had, in the absence of learning, their faith, which they found sufficient to bind them together in love, to strengthen them against temptation, and under poverty; to nerve them to courage, and fortify them for endurance. Thus it was at the time, while the spirit of confessorship was fresh and strong among them. But it is the first fruits of adversity only, or chiefly, that are blessed. In course of time, the enforced ignorance began to tell upon the mind, and the unrelieved oppression upon the temper, of the Catholic body; and we see the results now in those moral defects of the Irish which perpetuate their social miseries after the oppression has been removed. It should be remembered, on the other hand, that the spirit of the Reformation, which attributed all the evils in the world to Papistry, had not died out: that the memory of the worst days of the Inquisition was fresh, and the horror of the Gunpowder Plot, and the dread of the Stuarts. It was a mistake to suppose that the evils which took place under the prevalence of the Catholic faith were all attributable to that faith: and it was another mistake to suppose that any faith can be extirpated by persecution: but those were not days of philosophical statesmanship; and it would be unreasonable to look for the springing up of political philosophy by the light of Guy Fawkes's lantern, on the footsteps of successive Pretenders.

The first dawn of promise of better days appears to have followed upon the quietness of the Irish in the two Stuart rebellions. While Scotland and the north of England were up in arms, the Catholics of Ireland gave no trouble: and the Brunswick sovereigns were gratified and grateful. It was during their reigns that the Catholics had been deprived of the franchise: but that act had

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IRISH INTEREST.

been an adverting again to a political from a religious ground. The English faction had for some time been becoming Irish in its habits and predilections. As Mr. Burke said, "The English, as they began to be domiciliated, began also to recollect that they had a country;—what was at first strictly an English interest, by faint and almost insensible degrees, but at length openly and avowedly, became an independent Irish interest." The government feared an union between the two classes of Irish residents, which might become formidable to English rule; and they rendered the Catholic class politically powerless, by depriving them of the only remnant of social influence they still held—the franchise. But, when the Irish remained quiet during the two rebellions, they procured for themselves a degree of good-will from the English government which opened the way for their final emancipation. Their quietness was called "loyalty;" a term which it would be no credit to them to accord: for they owed no faith to a sovereignty which had kept none with them, but had humbled them from the rank of subjects to that of slaves. By whatever name it may be called, their demeanour obtained for them some countenance from George II. and his minister, Walpole: and in 1757 they first reappeared as a distinct moving body in the state,—presenting an address at Dublin Castle, during the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bedford.

1757

GRATTAN.
1780.

The "restraining system" continued, however, without material relaxation for twenty years longer. By that time, a young champion of liberty had risen up, ready to make use of, and to ripen, a better state of ideas and feelings than had existed in the days of his fathers. By lapse of time, men's minds had become enlarged, and their hearts freed from some old fears and hatreds: and Grattan was one to make the most of improved facilities, and to win over the best minds to the right side. After obtaining the removal of some restrictions on Irish commerce, he carried in the Irish parliament, in 1780, the memorable resolution, "that the King's Most Excellent Majesty, and the Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only competent power to make laws to bind Ireland." Many disqualifying statutes were repealed in the few subsequent years: and the admission of Catholics to a freer possession and disposal of land was the cause of that development of agriculture to which Ireland owes the greater part of the improvement in her material resources from that day to this.

VOLUNTEERS.

Some students of history look upon this year 1780 as the date of an Irish Revolution as important to the Irish as that of 1688 had been to Great Britain. Like most revolutions, it was achieved by the use of irregular instruments. It is not our business here to give over again the history of the Irish Volunteers; but merely to point to them and their agency, as a precedent which must be kept in view when we come to the contemplation of future volunteer associations in Ireland. The volunteers of the last century achieved a great work with little or no damage or discredit: they were repeatedly thanked by parliament: they were honoured and praised by the best part of society, in both England and Ireland: and there can be no reasonable wonder, after this, at the formation of future volunteer societies, when further liberties had to be contended for, and must, in the nature of things, be won. From the date of the victories of 1780, it was certain that the question of Irish and Catholic disqualifications could never again be put aside. Complete equality with Englishmen and Protestants, or complete separation, was thenceforth assured to the

Catholics of Ireland. The English government had relinquished (under whatever compulsion) the function of oppressor. There could be no rest now till it assumed that of liberator. And till the liberation was accomplished, there *was* no rest. During the interval of delay, the mind of the sovereign was perturbed,—once to the point of insanity;—every cabinet was first distracted and then broken up;—and parliament was agitated by the perpetual renewal of the Catholic demand for justice, and the spectacle of the gradual strengthening of the claim which could never more be got rid of.

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By this time, it must be remembered, the Catholics had largely increased in numbers. It is disputed whether, in 1800, there was any increase at all in the numbers of the Protestants in Ireland during the preceding half century: and it is certain that from two to one, the Catholics had then become four to one. The penal laws had tended to banish the Catholics from the towns, and drive them into a rural life,—too often sordid as their hopes, and wild as their despair. There in their recklessness, and under the influence of their priests, (who always promote marriage to the utmost,) the population had increased at an unusually rapid rate. The wise saw, at the end of the last century, that the Catholic Question had become, in fact, a physical force question. It had long been said, by a succession of writers and speakers, that the Catholics would obtain their liberties only by the fears and the wants of their oppressors: and now it began to be clear, with their numbers thickening on the Irish soil, and foes gathering against England on the Continent, that the time was coming for the fears of government to act. The rebellion of 1798 showed, to every man living at the time, what cause the government had for fear, and what its fears led it to do. Those fears led to the Act of Union in 1800, which Act was agreed to by the people of Ireland on a virtual pledge from Mr. Pitt that the Catholic disabilities should be removed. There is no doubt that Mr. Pitt purposed what he was held to have promised: but he pledged himself to more than he could accomplish. He promised more, on behalf of both King and Parliament, than either was willing to perform. The King scrupled about the Coronation Oath, with regard to which he declared that his mind had been made up ever since he came to the throne, in 1760. As he had done his part in repealing penal laws in 1778 and 1793, it was hardly to be supposed that he would make a stand in his course of concession at the point now reached: but Mr. Pitt had not formally ascertained that he would not: and a vigorous stand indeed was now made.

STRENGTH OF
CATHOLICS.

With regard to the Coronation Oath,—the fact is, that it was framed at a time when Catholics sat in both houses of parliament in Ireland, and when they were eligible to all offices, civil and military. The oath was taken by King William two years before the disqualifying statutes of his reign were passed. Much more might be said about the intent, scope, and terms of the Coronation Oath, showing that it did not bear upon the question of the exclusion of the Catholics: but the fact of the date is enough. The King, George III., however, was not one to discern things that differ, or to admit facts which opposed his opinions. So, when Lord Melville endeavoured to show him that his oath did not disqualify him for improving the legislation of the country, the King stopped him with the words "None of your Scotch metaphysics!" According to his own notion, he settled the matter by the well-known decla-

CORONATION
OATH.

1826.

Mr. Pitt.
1801.

Diaries iv. 34.

Diaries iv. 9.

ration which went to Pitt's heart, that he should consider any man his personal enemy who proposed any measure of relaxation of the Catholic disabilities. He was not enlightened enough to know that the affairs of nations cannot wait on the ignorance of kings. There were too many who helped to keep him in the dark, by applauses of his conscientiousness, and pleas on behalf of his perverted sense of responsibility. There were too many who, finding every ground of reasoning, political and religious, cut from under them, by the advance of time and enlightenment, clung to the one remaining plea,—that the King must not be vexed. Pitt was too wise to class himself with any of these: but yet he could not follow what he clearly saw to be the right. He had, by some carelessness, brought himself into a difficulty which was too strong for him. Even he, who took upon himself more responsibilities than any other man of his day would have ventured to assume, was overcome by the force of the dilemma in which he found himself placed. The King's tendency to insanity formed the peculiarity of the case. The man who saw the case so clearly,—the pressing nature of the Catholic claims, and the requisitions of his own honour in regard to them, writhed under the anguish of having driven the King into madness, and shrank from the risk of causing a repetition of the calamity, though millions of wronged subjects were waiting for their promised rights, and his own honour was importunate for satisfaction. It was a cruel position; and any man may be freely pitied who finds himself in it, however he came there. "The King," says Lord Malmesbury (March 7th, 1801), "in directing Willis to speak or write to Pitt, said, 'Tell him I am now QUITE recovered from my illness: but what has *he* not to answer for, who is the cause of my having been ill at all?' This, on being repeated, affected Pitt so deeply, that it immediately produced the letter mentioned above, and brought from him the declaration of his readiness to give way on the Catholic question." Pitt's letter "was most dutiful, humble, and contrite." Here was one side of his difficulty. The other was, in Lord Malmesbury's words, "While all these arrangements are making at home—all public business is at a stand: we forget the host of enemies close upon us, and everybody's mind thinks on one object only, unmindful that all they are contending about may vanish and disappear if we are subdued by France."

1804.

1807.

Diaries iv. 378.

The danger was imminent of the Irish uniting with the French against that throne which the King declared would become the right of the House of Savoy if he violated the Coronation Oath: and imminent the danger remained when Mr. Pitt came in again in 1804. But he had too terrible a fright ever to recover his courage; and he avoided the question during the short remainder of his life. In 1807, there was much stir about it, and the subject was brought forward in parliament, in the belief, authorized by some of the ministers, that the King had become apathetic about this, as about other public affairs: but, when appealed to for his opinion, by the enemies of emancipation, he showed himself as determined and as anxious as ever; and Lord Camden intimated to Lord Malmesbury that he conceived himself to have given a sort of pledge to Pitt, "that the question should not be mooted during the King's life." Lord Camden himself was, "like many others, not so much against the principle of emancipation, as because the King had declared himself." Foolish and wrong as such a reason was, it was one which tended to

keep the Catholics from rebellion. If they could really believe that their emancipation was awaiting the death of an infirm man of sixty eight, they might well have patience, in the hope of obtaining what they wanted by law, instead of by violence. And their condition was no longer one which it was difficult to endure from day to day, though it was such as they could not acquiesce in as permanent. At that time, in 1807, their disabilities were these.

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The Catholics of Ireland could not sit in either House of Parliament. No Catholic could be a guardian to a Protestant; and no priest could be a guardian at all. No Catholic could present to an ecclesiastical living, though Protestant Dissenters, and even Jews, could do so. Catholics were allowed to have arms only under certain restrictions; and no Catholic could be employed as a fowler, or keep any arms or warlike stores, for sale or otherwise. The pecuniary qualification of Catholic was higher than that of Protestant jurors. The list of offices, state and municipal, to which Catholics were ineligible, is long; and they were practically excluded from the public service. They were also liable to the penalties of the severest of the old laws, if they did not punctually exempt themselves by taking the oath and declaration prescribed by 13 and 14 George III., c. 3. Their legal disabilities occasioned incalculable suffering in their social relations,—legal degradation being always an invitation to the baser part of society to inflict insult and privation which cannot be retaliated. There was a systematic exclusion of Catholics from juries in Ireland; and in some districts absolutely a banishment of them from the soil. Every Catholic was so effectually excommunicated, in certain parts of Ireland, that he could not preserve his property, or remain on the spot: and if he happened to die before he could effect his removal, the passing bell was jerked into a merry measure. Some wretched facts of this nature were related, not only at a general meeting of Catholics held in April 1807, but by Protestant noblemen and magistrates residing in Ireland; one of whom, Lord Gosford, chief magistrate of the county of Armagh, published a statement whose date alone could make us believe that it belongs to the present century. Still, as there appeared to be hope after the death of a man of sixty-eight, the Catholics did not rebel.

DISABILITIES OF
CATHOLICS.
Edinburgh Re-
view, vol. xi, 121.

Edinburgh Re-
view, xi, 126.

In 1808, both Houses of Parliament refused to entertain the subject of Catholic Emancipation, under existing circumstances. On that occasion, Mr. Grattan first introduced the proposition of the Veto, afterwards so much discussed, according to which the King was to have power to put his Veto upon the nomination of Catholic Bishops. Mr. Grattan spoke as by authority: but a large portion of the Catholic body disapproved of the offer; and it occasioned much dissension among them. During Mr. Perceval's administration, broken up by his death in 1812, it had been a principle of his cabinet to resist the Catholic claims: but the resistance was based on no ground of principle, but only on the plea of unfavourable circumstances. Still, therefore, the Catholics might wait. But they were disposed to prepare for a change of circumstances, and if possible to hasten matters a little: so they enlarged the numbers, powers, and scope of their Catholic Committee, which met, debated, issued circulars, and originated action, and then dissolved itself, from year to year. A vain war was waged against this Committee in 1811 and 1812, by the Irish

CATHOLIC COM-
MITTEE. 1811.

1826. Government, on the ground of the Convention Act of 1793. But the Catholics continued to carry through their meetings, and carry out their objects; and Parliament refused to interfere against them, while declining to act in favour of the body they represented.

OPEN QUESTION.
1812.

The time was now past for constructing Cabinets on the principle of opposition to the Catholic claims. From this time it became an open question: and it proved as troublesome and unmanageable as open questions of pressing importance always are. Mr. Canning directly spoke out, and obtained a majority on his motion, that early in the next session the House should take the subject into its most serious consideration, with a view to a practical settlement. But before the next session, there was a new parliament, and the pledge of the old one was lost.

Now that the subject had obtained admission to parliament, arose the difficulties which were sure to spring up about the details of any measure of emancipation. The dissensions and discussions now began about how to proceed, about the securities which were offered or required, the safeguards which must be provided against foreign influence, the limitations as to office and function necessary at home, and all those matters of arrangement which indicated to men of business that some years must probably elapse before any effectual measure could be obtained, while they indicated to men of sagacity that this was the beginning of the end,—that the final stage of the struggle was entered upon. The scruples of the sovereign were no longer in the way: it was supposed, rightly or wrongly, that no difficulty would be found with the Prince Regent: almost as soon as Lord Liverpool entered office, he became convinced that concessions must be made in no long time; and before his health failed, he is known to have contemplated the necessity of retiring, to enable Mr. Canning to carry Catholic Emancipation. Every one saw that the shuffling expedient of sending over to Ireland administrations composed half and half of pro and anti-Catholic men could not answer for any length of time. It was clear that the crisis was coming: but the interval was painful and dangerous:—painful for the delay of right-doing, and the obstinate clinging to wrongful power; and dangerous to the political character of all concerned. Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning went on, session after session, moving the hearts and minds of the House and the country with pictures of the state of Ireland and of the Catholic mind: but nothing seemed to come of it. Men grew weary of so much talk with so little deed. By the time they had arrived at the session of 1820, accusations were all abroad against these two statesmen; accusations of insincerity and of cowardice; because it was believed that if they chose to make this a Cabinet question, it could be carried at once. They were accused of being bought off by the blandishments of the court, and the amenities of the other section of the cabinet. Lord Castlereagh soon after slipped away beyond the reach of human censure. How it told upon Mr. Canning was indicated by the extraordinary quarrel between him and Mr. Brougham in the session of 1823. In 1824, the aspect of the affairs of the Catholics was this, to a liberal and enlightened Churchman. “We are sorry we have nothing for which to praise administration on the subject of the Catholic question. . . . Looking to the sense and reason of the thing, and to the ordinary working of humanity and justice, when assisted, as they are here, by self-interest and

1821.

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Sydney Smith's
Works, iii. 12, 13.

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worldly policy, it might seem absurd to doubt of the result. But looking to the facts and the persons by which we are now surrounded, we are constrained to say that we greatly fear that these incapacities never will be removed, till they are removed by fear. What else, indeed, can we expect when we see them opposed by such enlightened men as Mr. Peel, faintly assisted by men of such admirable genius as Mr. Canning, when royal dukes consider it as a compliment to the memory of their fathers to continue this miserable system of bigotry and exclusion—when men act ignominiously and contemptuously on this question, who do so on no other question? . . . We repeat again, that the measure never will be effected but by fear. In the midst of one of our just and necessary wars, the Irish Catholics will compel this country to grant them a great deal more than they at present require, or even contemplate. We regret most severely the protraction of the disease, and the danger of the remedy: but in this way it is that human affairs are carried on."

And what was it that was in the way of the emancipation of the Catholics? STATE OF OPINION,
1824. This was the question of all others that it was, at the time, the most difficult to get answered. Was it the political or religious ground that was taken now? There could be no fear in 1824 that the Irish wanted to bring in the French—or to bring in the Stuarts, or to dethrone the House of Brunswick in favour of any royal house designated by the Pope. There could be no idea in this century of massacres for the faith, or of gunpowder plots, or of Smithfield fires, or of an Inquisition in England. And surely there could not be, in our day, any notion of converting five or six millions of Catholics from a false to a true faith by a system of exclusion and insult. How was it? What was the avowed ground of the opponents of the Catholic claims?

This is a case in which we see in what "way it is that human affairs are carried on." The reality was all gone out of the question on one side, and had left merely a residuum of words. The newer generations did not and could not feel the fierce political hatred and fear which instigated the early repression of the Catholics; and they showed no signs of religious proselytism. The truth was, there was no longer any common ground on which the opposition was conducted. Every opponent had his own plea: and the pleas were, for the most part, mere words. One talked of the Coronation Oath, following the lead of the Duke of York; though it was known that the King did not recognise that impediment. Another spoke of the compact with Ireland, according to which the Protestant church was to be exclusively favoured by the State. Another had no confidence in the Catholics. Others dreaded letting in the influence of the Pope. Others talked of "the mysterious and sublimed union of Church and State being a sacred subject, that soars above the ken of worldly policy:" and of its being "an ethereal essence, that sanctifies and gives a character of perpetuity to our State." All these difficulties, misty and unsubstantial, were sure to be wafted away by the first strong breeze of danger. And so were the impediments which were, in fact, the most real; those arising from habit. The habit of considering the Catholics excluded, inferior, dangerous, kept under by the wisdom of our ancestors, was in fact, the main obstacle to their emancipation. That which was afterwards ascertained and avowed was true now: that the real difficulty lay, not with kings, princes, and cabinets, but with the people of England, before whom the question had never

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yet been fairly brought. Nothing was so likely to bring the question before them as danger: and therefore it was that the advocates of the Catholics were justified in predicting, as they did from century to century, that fear would prove at last the emancipating power. Another means of presenting the matter fully to the popular mind began now, however, to come into full operation. The press was brought into action in a curious manner, on behalf of the struggling part. While the sons of Catholic gentry in Ireland were excluded from many lines by which eminence might be reached, they naturally flocked to the career of the law. While in London, training for the bar, many of them were glad to eke out their scanty resources by such profitable employment as they could find for their leisure hours which was not incompatible with their business and their station; and a large proportion of reporters for the London press at this time consisted of young Irish barristers. Those who reported the parliamentary debates naturally gave prominence to such as affected the Catholic question: and for some years before that question was settled, they indefatigably reported whatever was said upon it, excluding for its sake, when there was not room for everything, any other subject whatever. Those who are at present familiar with Irish newspapers are amused to see how many columns of parliamentary intelligence are filled with Irish affairs, while those of England, Scotland, and the Colonies are crowded into a corner; and thus it was when the Catholic question was approaching its crisis. By this accident or method, the British people were led to suppose that Catholic affairs occupied much more of the time and attention of the two Houses than they really did, and were brought, accordingly, to devote more thought and feeling to the great Catholic subject than they otherwise would. Everything being thus in train, the events of 1825 began their march, in the eyes of an attentive and anxious nation.

1825.

KING'S SPEECH.
Hansard, xii. 2.

The King's Speech, delivered by Commission on the 3rd of February, after congratulating parliament on the prosperity of the country, expressed gratification that this prosperity extended to Ireland, and that the outrages which had formerly prevailed had of late almost ceased. "It is therefore," continued the Speech, "the more to be regretted that Associations should exist in Ireland, which have adopted proceedings irreconcilable with the spirit of the constitution, and calculated, by exciting alarm, and by exasperating animosities, to endanger the peace of society, and to retard the course of national improvement. His Majesty relies upon your wisdom to consider without delay, the means of applying a remedy to this evil."

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 334.

This is the Speech of which Lord Eldon wrote "To-day we have a Cabinet in Downing Street, and Council at Carlton House, to try if we can make a good Speech for the King. But there are too many hands at work to make a good thing of it, and so you will think, I believe, when you read it." . . . "I don't much admire the composition or the matter of the Speech. My old master, the late King, would have said that it required to be set off by good reading. It falls to my lot to read it, and I should read it better if I liked it better."

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION.

A part of this Speech, a very small part, caused long and vehement debate in parliament. That small part was the letter S affixed to the word Association. The question was, whether the reprobation expressed related to the great new Catholic Association just arisen in Ireland, and was therefore a blow

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aimed expressly at the Catholics, or whether it included the Orange Clubs which were in great force at that time. The Catholic Association claimed the credit of having quieted the outrages of Ireland; and asserted their right to honour accordingly: while their enemies clamoured for their suppression, on the ground of the adjuration by which they had quieted Ireland. This adjuration was "by the hate they bore the Orangemen, who were their natural enemies, and by the confidence they reposed in the Catholic Association, who were their natural and zealous friends, to abstain from all secret and illegal associations and Whiteboy disturbances and outrages." Whether that letter S was a gloss or a reality, it is certain that the Catholic Association filled a space in the view of the Ministry and the country, which left little room for clubs of inferior magnitude. "Let the proposed measure be carried," said Mr. Brougham, "and the Catholic Association will be put down with one hand, while the Orange Societies will receive only a gentle tap with the other."

The Catholic Association had held its first open meeting in January of the preceding year: and in the following May, Mr. Plunket had declared, on being questioned in the House, that the government was closely watching its proceedings. The great avowed object of the Association was the preparation of petitions to parliament: but during a course of months, no petitions were forthcoming, while other kinds of business proceeded briskly. The Association held regular sessions in Dublin, nominated committees, received petitions, referred them to its committee of grievances, ordered a census of the population to be taken, and levied a tribute which was called the Catholic Rent. This tribute was declared to be voluntary, but it can hardly be said that the payments of the poor in Ireland, collected on the requisition of the priests, are voluntary; and the weekly collection was generally regarded as a tax. The avowed objects to which the money was to be applied were the supply of a Catholic priesthood to America; the supply of more priests to England; and the purchase of as much as could be had of the influence of the press. Into what other channels the money might flow, there was ample room for conjecture. It was believed that the amount often reached fifty pounds in a day: and government and parliament soon thought it time to be watching how it was spent.

Hansard, xi. 946.

Hansard, xi. 944.

Among those who feared and disliked this Association were the English Catholics generally. Lord Redesdale writes to the Lord Chancellor, on the last day of 1824, "I learn that Lord Fingall and others, Catholics of English blood, are alarmed at the present state of things: and they may well be alarmed. If a revolution were to happen in Ireland, it would be in the end an Irish revolution, and no Catholic of English blood would fare better than a Protestant of English blood. So said Lord Castlehaven, an Irish Catholic general of English blood, 170 years ago, and so said a Roman Catholic of Irish blood, confidentially to me above twenty years ago. The question is, not simply Protestant and Catholic, but English and Irish: and the great motive of action will be hatred of the Sassenagh, inflamed by the priests. Here was the old quarrel again: and here was the danger which made wise men believe that the day of emancipation was drawing on.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 530.

For a little while, the fear excited by this body caused an unusual jealousy

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EARL MARSHAL.

on the part of the King about any favour being shown to English Catholics. He who had, after his accession, cordially offered religious equality to his Hanoverian subjects, cavilled at parliament, and grew stiff with his Chancellor, in the summer of 1824, because the Catholic Duke of Norfolk was enabled, by a bill which passed both Houses, to exercise his office of Earl Marshal of England, by taking the oath of allegiance, without that of supremacy, or the declaration against transubstantiation. The dread was lest, by beginning to give anything, it should become necessary to give, first, more, and then everything which the Catholics demanded. As the Chancellor himself bowed to the declared will of the Lords, the King yielded; and the Earl Marshal appeared in his robes in the House which he could not yet enter as a peer of parliament: and the sky did not fall.

CATHOLIC DEPUTATION.

A deputation of Catholic Lords and gentlemen, sent by the Association, was sitting in London, to watch over the interests of their body, under the approaching attack upon it in parliament, and to be ready to afford information to friendly legislators of either House, in answer to whatever charges might be brought. On the 10th of February, the Irish Secretary, Mr. Goulburn, brought in a Bill "to amend the Acts relating to unlawful societies in Ireland," the object of which was to put down the Catholic Association. Through Mr. Brougham, the deputation made known their desire to be heard at the bar of the House, in justification of their body from certain allegations made against them in parliament. Of course, this could not be granted, as the Association was not a recognised body, but one whose unconstitutional character was admitted on every hand. The only question really was, whether there existed a crisis which could be held to justify the formation of such an organization. Some spoke of the Volunteers of 1780, and reminded each other that those Volunteers had repeatedly received the thanks of parliament: but the parallel between the two cases failed in the important particular, that the Volunteers did not unite for political purposes, but for the military defence of the country. They made use of their organization at length for political purposes, and achieved them: but there was nothing in their case which could be allowed as a precedent in any but warlike or revolutionary times. While the Catholic claims were an open question in the Cabinet, and any one Cabinet Minister was pledged in its favour, there could be no excuse for any kind of revolutionary institution or movement. Mr. Goulburn obtained his bill by a majority of 278 to 123, and it became law on the 9th of March. It apparently annihilated the Catholic Association: but the dissolution was a mere form. To lay a finger upon it was merely to scatter a globule of quicksilver: it was sure to run together again. Justice was the only true amalgamating power; and every endeavour to delay its application only proved its necessity the more.

Hausard, xii. 521.
ASSOCIATION DIS-
SOLVED.

The parliamentary advocates of the cause mourned at length and aloud the formation of the Association, and its adjuration "by the hate you bear to Orangemen." Mr. Canning, to whom it was owing that the King was converted and the Cabinet liberalized, declared that the procedure "resembled the scheme of an enemy, who had devised this as the best invention for throwing back and thwarting the further progress of the question of emancipation." So thought the friends of the Catholics, very sincerely. But they

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stood outside the cause; and those who were within it believed them wrong: and so the event proved them to be. The subjects of a great cause always move in it differently from the way that their friends outside would have them: and the sufferers usually show in the end that they understand their business best. They were satisfied now with their own method of proceeding. They knew that their Association would be put down: and they were no doubt aware that it ought to be put down. The leaders were sagacious lawyers, as was shown by the curious care with which the addresses and proceedings of the body were kept within the letter of the existing law, so that it was necessary for the Administration to come to parliament for a new law to suppress them. This necessity was the crowning success, for this year, of the Association. The leaders were satisfied when they saw the House of Commons sitting night after night, adjourning late in the morning for successive mornings, filling the eye and ears of the nation with the acts and appeals of the Catholic body. This was victory for the time: the completest victory that the time would admit. They knew that the real obstacle to their emancipation was now the indifference of the English nation. They knew that the King was near the point of yielding,—thanks to the influence of Mr. Canning. They knew that the Cabinet was vacillating,—thanks to the influence of Mr. Canning. They knew that if Mr. Canning was called up, even to reprobate them and their proceedings, they would have an all-sufficient advocacy: for his very reprobation must be the strongest possible testimony to the pressure of the time. They obtained all they could have contemplated, and perhaps more than they anticipated, in the avowal and narrative which the pressure of the time elicited from him, of his own experience, and that of all the statesmen of his day, in relation to this cause. Perhaps no single manifestation so aided the Catholic cause, in its whole career, as the memorable speech of February 15th, in which Mr. Canning delivered to the world the history of the Catholic question for the preceding century, and his own history in connection with it. The narrative came to the ear of the nation as a decree of fate; and his political autobiography went far to win over the nation's heart. Having shown how he took his stand upon the Catholic question when the most insuperable obstacle was removed by the withdrawal of George III. from political life, and how he refused office at the most tempting moment rather than enter a Cabinet decided against the Catholic claims, he went on. "Sir, I have always refused to act in obedience to the dictates of the Catholic leaders; I would never put myself into their hands: and I never will Much as I have wished to serve the Catholic cause, I have seen that the service of the Catholic leaders is no easy service. They are hard task-masters: and the advocate who would satisfy them must deliver himself up to them bound hand and foot. . . . But to be taunted with a want of feeling for the Catholics, to be accused of compromising their interests, conscious as I am,—as I cannot but be,—of being entitled to their gratitude for a long course of active services, and for the sacrifice to their cause of interests of my own,—this is a sort of treatment which would rouse even tameness itself to assert its honour, and vindicate its claims.—I have shown that in the year 1812, I refused office rather than enter into an administration pledged against the Catholic question. I did this at a time when office would have been dearer to

Hansard, xii.
492-3.

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me than at any other period of my political life ; when I would have given ten years of life for two years of office ; not for any sordid or selfish purpose of personal aggrandisement, but for far other and higher views. But, is this the only sacrifice which I have made to the Catholic cause ? The House will perhaps bear with me a little longer, while I answer this question by another fact.—From the earliest dawn of my public life,—aye, from the first visions of youthful ambition,—that ambition had been directed to one object above all others. Before that object all others vanished into comparative insignificance ; it was desirable to me beyond all the blandishments of power, beyond all the rewards and favours of the Crown. That object was to represent, in this House, the University in which I was educated. I had a fair chance of accomplishing this object when the Catholic question crossed my way. I was warned, fairly and kindly warned, that my adoption of that cause would blast my prospect. I adhered to the Catholic cause, and forfeited all my long-cherished hopes and expectations. And yet I am told that I have made no sacrifice ! that I have postponed the cause of the Catholics to views and interests of my own ! Sir, the representation of the University has fallen into worthier hands. I rejoice with my right honourable friend near me (Mr. Peel), in the high honour which he has obtained. Long may he enjoy the distinction ; and long may it prove a source of reciprocal pride, to our parent University and to himself ! Never till this hour have I stated, either in public or in private, the extent of this irretrievable sacrifice : but I have not felt it the less deeply. It is past, and I shall speak of it no more."

Nothing could be a stronger testimony to the urgency of the cause than that the foremost of British statesmen should be subject to compulsion like this, forced to avowals like these, while separated by deep distrust and dislike from the Catholic leaders. But even yet, the degree of the urgency was not understood. Mr. Peel sat by Mr. Canning's side, and received his congratulations on his relation to the University of Oxford, and heard his hopes that the relation might subsist long and happily. But even then there were stirrings in the heart of the listener,—there were doubts beginning to move in his mind which already put that relation in jeopardy, and were soon to exclude him, in his turn, from the representation of his University. When his turn arrived, he confessed that the events of the session of 1825 had made such an impression upon him that he went to Lord Liverpool, desiring to resign his office, because the opinion of the House was declared against him on the Catholic question, and avowing to the Premier that he believed the time was come when "something ought to be done about the Catholics." Lord Liverpool's threat of retiring also induced Mr. Peel to wait for another manifestation of the feelings of the country : but this was the time when the hook caught the chain which bound him to follow the destiny of Canning in his sacrifices for the Catholic question.

Mr. Canning called the Catholic leaders "hard task-masters," whose advocates must submit to be bound hand and foot. Nothing could please them better than such a description. The reputation of a strong will is, in itself, an unlimited power. These men had ceased to be suppliants, and had become task-masters, whoever might be their servants. The description was true : for

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Daniel O'Connell had been an active agitator on behalf of the Catholic claims for so many years now, as to be known by name through the length and breadth of the kingdom. He had been a chief mover in the committees in Dublin : he was the organiser of the Association, and was now reputed to hold three millions of the Irish people in his hand, ready with a touch to be turned to good or evil. He came up as a delegate invested in a kind of glory : for in Dublin, he had been indicted for sedition, in the January just past ; and the grand jury had thrown out the bills. He who had evaded the law in the formation and procedure of successive Catholic committees,—he who had defied the law in the late prosecution for sedition,—he who held three millions of the Irish people in his hand, and the peace of Ireland at his bidding, might think himself entitled to be a “hard task-master.” And he who was not only idolized by the multitude among whom he had lived, and adored by his own family, but who so attached his personal friends by his charms of intellect and temper, as that they could not sit in the room while he was found fault with, might well suppose himself authorized to issue his commands, and have them readily obeyed, whatever they might be. But there was one attribute of his which made him too hard a task-master for men who chose to retain their manhood—his incapacity for truth. The untruthfulness of O'Connell must be regarded as a constitutional attribute. He was so devoid of all compunction and all shame in regard to the random character of his representations, that the only supposition is, that he had not the ordinary perception of truth and falsehood : and this became at last so general an impression, that the rest of his character was judged of, apart from this, in a way which, perhaps, was never tried in the case of any other man. If he could not obtain respect, he obtained admiration and enthusiasm, even from many who hold, with the rest of the world, that the qualities he was deficient in, veracity and high courage, are precisely the first requisites of political honour, the most essential attributes of the political hero. Nature now and then sets aside, with a haughty movement, all rules—even of morals : and in this case she so overruled matters, as that a man whom every one knew to be neither brave, nor veracious, nor of thorough disinterestedness, should obtain, not merely the influence, but the deference which is usually accorded to high character only. Of course, he had qualities which must account for this : moral as well as intellectual qualities. His domestic use of power was very beautiful,—genial and benevolent. His ardour was captivating, and thoroughly respectable, when thrown into the great cause. His buoyancy and gaiety of spirit were as attractive and attaching as his sagacity, energy and perseverance were animating to his coadjutors. When we consider, in connection with these things, what it must have been to the Irish Catholics to have a champion and leader who was really able to manage their cause, and determined to carry it through, how much of ancient expectation and new hope settled upon his head, we cannot wonder that he was regarded by multitudes as a heaven-sent king, and that he received homage accordingly, though some of the highest kingly qualities were wanting. The truth appears to have been that in O'Connell two sets of characteristics were united, which are usually supposed to be incompatible. He was genuinely impetuous, ardent, open-hearted, patriotic and devoted : and then again, he was genuinely cautious and astute ; calculating, sly, untruthful ; grasping, selfish, and hypocritical.

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He was profuse, and he was sordid : he was rash, and he was unfathomably politic : now he was flowing out, and now he was circumventing. Among all his changes, however, he never was brave, he never was reliable or accurate ; and he never kept his eye off the money-boxes which supplied his annual income from the scrapings of the earnings of the poor. There was no reasonable objection to O'Connell's being supported by his country. There was every reason why he should be, and none why he should not. He had a large family, and was sure to rise to great eminence in his profession, if he had devoted himself to it as professional men usually do. If, because he was the man to redeem the Irish cause, he was withdrawn from his profession and its emoluments, it was merely just that he should be compensated by the Irish people. But nothing could be worse than the way in which it was done ;—nothing could be worse for his character, his mind, and the reputation of the cause. Instead of a single effort made vigorously and once by the wealthy of his clients, and all who chose to give, whether little or much, so that means might be raised equal to the utmost which Mr. O'Connell could have made by his profession, to set him free to serve his country for life, the subscription was made an annual affair, and levied under the compulsion of the priests. There is no need to dwell on this. The consequences may be easily inferred. It made his very enemies blush to see how the affair went on, in the latter years of his life, when the begging season came round. Great allowance must be made for a man placed in such circumstances of precariousness. But a review of his character on all sides, with every allowance that justice and mercy require, must leave an impression that he must indeed have been the chief of the “hard task-masters” with whom statesmen could come into no alliance, because true alliance was not possible, but only fettered service, such as cannot be rendered by honourable men.

PROGRESS OF THE
QUESTION.

The sending of the delegates to London, and the necessity of bringing the Catholic Association under the notice of parliament, were very welcome to the liberal section of the cabinet. Till now, their position had been painful, as a position of compromise must ever be. The administration in Ireland had been carefully composed, half and half, of favourers and opponents of the Catholic cause : and, of course, there had existed the consequent evil of an unsound and unsteady government in that disturbed quarter. The enforced silence upon Irish subjects in the cabinet must have been irksome ; and the awaiting of some inevitable change not a little fearful. All were set free now ; for they were all united in reprobating the Catholic Association as unlawful machinery which could not be allowed to work : and the occasion brought freedom of speech and hope of a good issue to the friends of the Catholics. They spoke out, and emptied their full hearts and minds : and they saw that the protracted debates on the Catholic subject which succeeded one another for some months of this session, were aiding the cause more than any transactions of all previous years.

Life of Lord El-
den, ii, 538.

By the bill which put down the Catholic Association, it was declared unlawful for all political associations to continue their sittings, by adjournment or otherwise, or whether in full sittings or by committee, or officers, for more than fourteen days : or to levy contributions from his Majesty's subjects, or from any descriptions of them : or for any such societies to have different branches, or to

correspond with other societies, or to exclude members on the ground of religious faith, or to require oaths or declarations otherwise than as required by law. As soon as the parliament rose, that is, in July, a new Catholic committee offered a plan of a new association, and a recommendation to the Catholic body to push to the utmost their practice of petitioning and other political action, by methods independent of the association, as the law now forbade such action within it. Suggestion like this was, in fact, action; and nothing was gained by the new law but an excellent opportunity for setting forth the strength of the Catholic cause.

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NEW CATHOLIC
ASSOCIATION.

During March, Sir F. Burdett introduced, first, a debate on the general petition of the Catholics: next, a set of resolutions which were passed as the foundation of a relief bill, which went through the stage of debate in the Commons on the 21st of April. Mr. O'Connell declared, in a letter which found its way into the newspapers, that the preparation of the draught of the bill had been committed to him. This damaging declaration being noticed by the adverse members of the cabinet, was emphatically denied by the committee, who pledged themselves that no person out of the committee had had the smallest share in the preparation of the bill.

SIR F. BURDETT'S
RELIEF BILL.Annual Register,
1825, p. 54.

This bill was an immediate consequence of the avowal which the friends of the Catholics had found themselves bound to make in the preceding debate,—that they were ready to support the Catholic claims when severed from their connection with the Association. They were immediately taken at their word; and brilliant was the result. The debating was magnificent, or rather the outpouring of eloquence on one side; for all the strength was in one direction: and the majority by which the bill passed the Commons was 268 to 241. The bill proposed the repeal of disabilities; the enactment of a state provision for the Catholic clergy; and the raising of the Irish franchise qualification from 40s. to £10. It was supposed that by placing the first of these propositions between the other two, the advantage to the Catholics between an advantage to the state and one to the Protestant minority, who complained of being swamped by the Catholic majority at elections, the bill might be floated through parliament. The two latter provisions were called the wings of the bill: but they proved to be leaden wings. There was an outcry against both provisions too strong for even the popular O'Connell, who held the peace of Ireland in his hand. After having boasted that the bill was of his preparation, he could not deny his agreement to the obnoxious propositions. He made a recantation, and asked pardon of God and his country. Such an error and recantation may pass for once: and O'Connell's passed for this time.

Hansard, xlii. 123.

After the division on the second reading of the bill in the Commons, the Heir Presumptive made a bold stroke in the Lords to obtain its rejection there. In presenting a petition from the Dean and Canons of Windsor against the Catholic claims, the Duke of York took occasion to declare his own opinion on the subject, and his own intentions in case of his succeeding to the crown. He laid before the House the case of the late king,—“the severe illness, and ten years of misery which had clouded the existence of his illustrious and beloved father,” on account of the scruples of his conscience about the Coronation Oath: he declared that his principles were the same; “and that these were the principles to which he would adhere, and which he would maintain and

DUKE OF YORK'S
DECLARATION.

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Annual Register,
1825, p. 60.

Hansard, xii. 808.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 520.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 546.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 548.

BILL LOST.

Life of Lord El-
don, ii. 554.

act up to, to the latest moment of his existence, whatever might be his situation of life,—so help him God!" The Lord Chancellor listened with delight, and wrote out the speech in his anecdote-book before he slept. The bigots on his side got it printed in gold letters, and framed it for their drawing-room walls, and circulated it through the country. The effect produced was somewhat different to what was intended and expected. It showed that an effort must be made to secure Catholic emancipation during the life of the present king; and exertion was stimulated accordingly. It happened, too, that some words had been spoken on the other side, which took great hold of the public mind, and perhaps spread as widely as the declaration of the Heir Presumptive. On the 28th of February, Mr. Plunket had said in the debate on Sir F. Burdett's motion, that the danger to be looked in the face was not the danger of the days of James II., but of the present time; the danger of exasperating millions of fellow-subjects excluded from their rights. The bigot plea was of the danger of innovation: but, said the speaker, "Time was the greatest innovator of all. While man would sleep or stop in his career, the course of time was rapidly changing the aspect of all human affairs. All that a wise government could do was to keep as close as possible to the wings of time, to watch his progress, and accommodate his motion to their flight. Arrest his course they could not; but they might vary the forms and aspects of their institutions, so as to reflect his varying aspects and forms. If this were not the spirit which animated them, philosophy would be impertinent, and history no better than an old almanack. The riches of knowledge would serve them no better than the false money of a swindler, put upon them at a value which once circulated, but had long since ceased. Prudence and experience would be no better for protection than dotage and error." Lord Eldon was persuaded that these words, everlastingly true, were aimed at a speech of his about the Catholics of the time of Henry VIII., "thinking it proper to treat this as a sort of speech which an almanack-maker, reciting past events, might make; and which, therefore, might deserve no answer." But the sentiment of Mr. Plunket's words made its way. "Never," says the Chancellor, "was anything like the sensation the Duke of York's speech has made. . . . I hear that 'the Duke of York and No Popery' is to be seen in various parts. The Bishop of London declared that he believed (speaking when he delivered a petition yesterday), 'that he was satisfied—nine people in ten in the City were determinedly adverse to the claims of the Roman Catholics.'" Yet the sentiment of Mr. Plunket's words made its way. "I forgot to mention," writes the Chancellor, "in my last, that the Commons stared me very impudently in the face, when they delivered to me the Catholic Bill at the bar of the House. *This* Bill, however, I think those gentlemen will never see again." The Lords threw out the Bill at a little before six in the morning of the 18th of May, by a majority of 48 in a House of 308. "Lady Warwick and Lady Braybrooke," writes the Chancellor, "would not let their husbands go to the House to vote for the Catholics: so we Protestants drink daily, as our favourite toast, 'the ladies who locked up their husbands.'" "The glorious forty-eight" were toasted in bumpers, and the victors "were becoming composed after their triumphs;" and still the sentiment of Mr. Plunket's words was making its way. The temporary defeat took place on Wednesday, May 18th. On the Thursday, "Mr. O'Connell,"

writes the Chancellor, "pleaded as a barrister before me in the House of Lords. His demeanour was very proper, but he did not strike me as shining so much in argument as might be expected from a man who has made so much noise in his harangues in a seditious association." The Chancellor forgot that a cause in the House of Lords could hardly be so inspiring to a barrister as the cause of his country to its champion: and that Mr. O'Connell might easily hold himself calm and common-place in another sphere, while in his own the sentiment of Mr. Plunket's words was making its way.

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Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 553.

During the next session, that of 1826, nothing was done in Parliament on the Catholic question beyond the presentation of petitions. The Lords had declared their opinion decisively enough for the present: and in the Commons it was understood that the session would be short, in view of the approaching dissolution, and that the great questions of the time had better stand over for the consideration of the new parliament. The Catholic petitions were chiefly directed to meet the objection of the supposed divided allegiance of the Catholics. It was in vain attempting to meet this objection by the declaration, however extensively confirmed, that Catholics held an undivided allegiance to their King in civil affairs: no one doubted this. The objection was, that their spiritual allegiance to the Pope might at any time interfere with their civil allegiance to their King. The true way of meeting this objection was to render them easy and satisfied. If the Pope really wished to make mischief between the Catholics and the British Government, he could do it very effectually already; and with the more excuse the more they were wronged. To keep them in a state of exasperation by political exclusion was not the way to render them loyal, but rather to make the Pope their partizan against their sovereign. The petitions of this session were therefore of little use. They did not truly meet the objection of one party, and were not needed by the other.

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QUESTION OF DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE.

A new enmity became manifest this year. The Catholics and the Dissenters drew off from each other. The Dissenters were themselves suffering under disabilities which might naturally dispose them to sympathize with the Catholics, and to work in their behalf. But they were, generally speaking, lukewarm in the cause. It is not difficult to understand this, though the fact is not an agreeable one to contemplate. Like too large a majority of mankind, the English Dissenters could feel deeply and argue clearly about the rights of conscience when their own consciences were interfered with, but be too much affected by fear to feel the full force of their abstract reasonings when their own experience was not concerned. They were Protestants: they feared the Pope and the ravages of superstition as much as their Protestant brethren within the church pale: and the Annual Indemnity Bill, which gave them practical freedom, saved them from sharing the exasperation of the Catholics under their legal disabilities. And they were not united with the Catholics in any hope from the influence of Mr. Canning: for Mr. Canning was as openly and fixedly their adversary as he was the advocate of the Catholics. Mr. Canning's opposition to the repeal of the Test Act remains a rebuke to the pride of human reason and to the confidence of hero-worship. Those who exulted in his clear view of the case of the Catholics, and his soundly-principled advocacy of their claims, were perplexed and abashed by his indefensible

CATHOLICS AND
DISSENTERS.
Annual Register,
1826, p. 127.

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Life of Canning,
p. 355.

and unaccountable refusal to apply the same sagacity and the same principles to the case of the disqualified Dissenters. And it was not for Mr. Canning to complain of the judgment which his inconsistency was sure to bring upon him; nor for his friends to wonder and lament if, after his death, such speculations as that of Lord Rossmore, in his "Letter on Catholic Emancipation," dishonoured his memory, as far as the matter went. "Is there no satisfactory reason," says Lord Rossmore, "why a mind like that of Mr. Canning should depart from his own general principles in the case of the Dissenters alone? May he not have reasoned thus? If I concede the wishes of the Dissenters separately, may I not weaken the common cause,—the Dissenters not having much sympathy with the claims of the Catholics? But if I carry Emancipation, I secure the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; for, if the former succeeds, the latter follows."—This is not like Canning,—such a method of coercing one set of people, under false pretences, to further the emancipation of another. But, if this was not his reason, there is no saying what was. It remains a painful mystery.

THE ELECTIONS.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 173.

There is much that is painful in the survey of the time and persons under our present notice. The Catholics were putting forth all their powers in preparation for the elections; and the full force of the influence of the priesthood was brought to bear upon the forty-shilling freeholders, in a manner which made as complete a mockery of the representative system as was ever made by the Irish landlords, who had covered their domains with small freeholds for their political convenience. Some of this class of Irish landlords were ejecting their tenants by wholesale, for their obedience to the priests in the elections: and the new Catholic Association was voting funds for the relief of the people thus left homeless. The Dissenters were holding off from aiding the Catholics; and the Catholic leaders were reviling the Dissenters. Mr. Canning was doing wrong by the one body by the very act of doing right by the other. The Duke of York was endeavouring, by a proceeding of extraordinary audacity, to achieve the dismissal of Mr. Canning from the Cabinet. He was naturally animated by the effect his speech had produced: and he saw, as every one else did, what its operation was in stimulating the friends of the Catholics to obtain their emancipation during the life of the King. He took upon him now, in the autumn of 1826, to address the King on the subject of obtaining unity of opinion in the Cabinet on the Catholic question. In this he was not likely to succeed, after his attempt on the royal feelings in his late speech. The King had observed on that speech, in a good-humoured way, that the Duke might have left out his reference to his possible accession to the throne, as its present occupant did not mean to quit it. Preserving his good-humour, he still would hardly relish the Duke's interference with the opinions and constitution of his Cabinet. But it was unnecessary to do more than keep quiet in relation to the Duke; for it was becoming clear that he would never more influence the politics of England, or any other human affairs. To complete the circle of wrong-doers, Mr. O'Connell was treating the illness of the Duke of York in the following style. "I wish no physical ill to the Royal Duke; but if he has thrown his oath in the way of our liberties, and that as long as he lives justice shall not be done to the people of Ireland, it is mockery to tell me that the people of Ireland have not an interest in his ceasing to live.

THE DUKE OF
YORK AND THE
KING.
Life of Canning,
p. 237.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 547.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 126.

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Death is the corrector of human errors ; it is said to be man's hour for repentance, and God's opportunity. If the Royal Duke should not become converted from his political errors, I am perfectly resigned to the will of God, and shall abide the result with the most Christian resignation." This declaration was received with "laughter and cheers." To this pass were men brought,—to such a state of principle and temper as this, all round, by the protraction of injury to one class of fellow-subjects. The consolation was in the moral certainty that an effectual change could not be far off. On the whole, the anti-Catholic interest seemed to have gained most in the elections : but some great single victories had been obtained on the side of emancipation ; and the power of the Catholic Association had been so effectually proved, by the expulsion of the Beresfords from the representation of their own tenantry, and in some other instances, that it was clear that the struggle could not now end by any other means than being brought to an issue. It was becoming clear that the Duke of York would never reach the throne ; and a general belief was arising that the Cabinet was in process of conversion to the views of Mr. Canning. There was a persuasion, on the whole, prevalent in the country, that this new parliament was the last which would be occupied with the discussion of the Catholic question.

ASPECT OF THE
QUESTION.

CHAPTER XI.

1826.

CHANCERY RE-
FORM.
1823.

IN the course of the last three sessions of this parliament, a reform was begun which the nation had for some time been peremptorily demanding;—by its discontents, yet more than by its express petitions. The delay of justice in the Court of Chancery had become insufferable: and the time was come for proof whether the grievance could not be amended. Perhaps no narrative of a process of reform is more instructive than this in showing how that inexorable Fate,—the spirit of Reform, evoked by grievance,—compasses its end, through all obstructions of human error and ignorance, human will, and even human conscience, when that conscience is deficient in enlightenment. Among the movers against the evils of the Court of Chancery were some men who were not lawyers, and who therefore naturally stated their case ignorantly:—and there were some who were trained and practised in a different department of the law, and who were therefore ridiculed by Equity lawyers for errors in the object and expression of their complaint. The strong, united will of the Cabinet and of the Equity lawyers was opposed to all entrance upon the subject. And the conscience of the Chancellor was so satisfied with the existing state of things, that it resented any question of them; and, at the same time, so tender that it winced under any inquiry into the discharge of business, as under a personal injury. Yet the inquiry went on, because it had become necessary. The Chancellor's friends laughed at the complaint of the locking up of large funds in Chancery for half a century together, alleging the cases in which property was truly in ward, and the dividends punctually paid: but there were cases in which no proceeds could be obtained. The Chancellor and his friends scorned the complaints of the expenses of the Court, showing that his income had never exceeded a certain amount: but the expenses were intolerable notwithstanding. The Government clearly proved an enormous increase of Chancery business within a certain term, and avouched the industry of Lord Eldon: but it remained true, and unendurable, that suitors could not get their business settled. The Chancellor and his friends called the complainants "ignorant fellows" and "malicious rascals;" and the complainants called the Lord Chancellor "a curse to the country:" yet, amidst their alienation, they worked together, under that inexorable Fate,—the spirit of Reform, evoked by grievance. Thus it always happens, and must happen; and it would be well if we could learn from such histories to assume the certainty of reform, after any manifestation of grievance, and to see the absurdity of all violence, all loss of temper on any hand, in the prosecution of a work which pays no heed to our infirmities.

On the 4th of June, 1823, Mr. John Williams, afterwards one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench, moved for an inquiry into the arrear of business in the Court of Chancery, and the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords, and

the causes thereof. "It now seemed to be conceded on all hands," the mover declared, "that evils of no ordinary magnitude existed, and that the present system could no longer go on without some amendment or improvement." It appears that the Chancellor himself was of the same mind with other people, as to the necessity of inquiry: for, within a month of Mr. Williams's motion, he communicated to the House of Lords his purpose of having a commission to inquire whether any, and what, improvements could be made in the administration of the Court of Chancery. Yet, his wrath against the inquirers in the House of Commons seems to show that he would hardly have stirred at this time, if they had not stimulated him to do so. Throughout the whole affair, which extended over several years, he appears to have been unable, for a single moment, to regard it as anything but a personal matter. The complainants divided their informations into two parts: those which regarded the faulty constitution or arrangements of the Courts, and those which related to the quality of the Chancellor's mind, in which the tendency to doubt had become so strong as to overbear the fine faculties and attainments which otherwise fitted him eminently for his office. The debate on Mr. Williams's motion continued for two nights, and brought out enough of fact and opinion to assure the Ministers that the object would not drop till something was done. Their plea of the vast increase of Chancery business availed only to prove that matters could not go on as they were; and a broad hint to this effect was given in the introduction of a discussion about separating the judicial and political functions of the Lord Chancellor.

1826.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 488.

In the House of Lords it had been suggested in the preceding April to alter the method of hearing appeals there; and it was proposed by Lord Liverpool, on the 26th of June, that a deputy Speaker of the House of Lords should be appointed, and that five days in the week, instead of three, should be devoted to the hearing of appeals. The arrangement was made: but the Chancellor could not let the occasion pass without entering upon an exhibition of self-assertion and self-defence which not only lowered his dignity, and engaged the compassion of parliament, but proved to the movers in the question of Chancery Reform that it must inevitably be made a personal matter, as the Chancellor chose to regard it so; and the bickerings and evil-speaking which hence arose became very painful, and damaging alike to the character of the Court and the progress of the question.

Annual Register, 1823, p. 93.
MOVEMENT IN THE LORDS.

As the next session (of 1824) approached, the Chancellor grew uneasy, in apprehension of the renewal of the subject: and he applied to Mr. Peel for the full support and protection of the Cabinet. Mr. Williams's motion was brought forward on the 24th of February. Lord Eldon observes upon it, that every moment of negligence in an official course of twenty-two years was noted; and that many of the complaints were perfectly new to him and his friends:—an evident benefit already arising from the discussion, and a clear reason for prosecuting the inquiry. In answer to the motion for a committee, Mr. Peel moved for a commission, such as the Chancellor had proposed after the debate of the previous summer. This was what was wanted, or something very like it: and Mr. Williams therefore withdrew his motion. The Chancellor's own account of the matter is curious. "At my instance, therefore, Mr. Peel, in a most admirable speech, moved for such a commission, as a great merit on my part in

1824.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 487.

GOVERNMENT
MOVES FOR A
COMMISSION.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 488.

1826.

aiming at improvement, instead of this Committee of Vengeance; and this threw Mr. Williams, &c., upon their backs, and they did not venture to divide. So, for the present, *this* storm is over, and matters will be tolerable till the next begins to rage."

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 490.

Here was his mistake,—in thinking himself at liberty to stand still as soon as his enemies (as he called them) were quieted by the pledges of his friends. As soon as the results were called for, he considered it a new onslaught of the foe, and fortified himself in obstinacy accordingly, so as to place his colleagues in a situation of great difficulty. He gives his view in a letter of the date of February 28th, 1824. "The fact is, from year to year, party is attempting to drive me out of the Chancellorship. God knows I should be very happy if I had nothing to do with it. If these malignant attacks had not been made against me, year after year, I should have been in retirement; but to hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, I will not give way. I will not gratify those who revile me. My rule through life has been to do what I think right, and to leave the consequences to God." Strange words these last—given in the same breath with the declaration that he remained in office only because others wished him out of it! And this pettishness and self-will become nothing less than shocking when we consider on whom the eyes and minds of the movers in parliament were really fixed:—not on an aged judge, whom they wished to insult and displace from gratuitous malice; but on the impoverished orphan, the sunken widow, the broken-spirited gentleman, whose lives were passed in vain hope, or listless despair of getting justice from the court which assumed to be their protector. It was impossible to think much of Lord Eldon's complacencies, or tears, or self-pity, while vast estates lay waste and weed-grown, and whole tenancies sank down into pauperism under the blight of the Court of Chancery.

1825.

In the session of 1825, it had become apparent that the stir had not been without its use. It was now admitted on all hands that improvement was needed. The commission of the previous year had collected a vast amount of evidence, but had not reported. There was a demand in the Commons that the evidence should be printed, without waiting for the Report; a demand which was, of course, unacceptable to the Lord Chancellor and the other members of the government. The correspondence between the Premier and the Chancellor on this occasion shows how urgent the demand for Chancery reform had become, and how much more important it was than it could have been rendered by any mere enmity against the judge of the court. Meantime, that judge was strengthening himself against his enemies, instead of making them friends by working with them in a good cause. "Lord Stowell," he says, "called on Wednesday very kindly to express his hope that Williams and Co. had not on Tuesday disturbed my peace of mind. They certainly did not. . . . But, thank God, I am well in health, and in mind I grow more easy and calmous." The correspondence with the Premier took place on occasion of an order recorded in the Journal of the Commons, on the 30th of June, "that there be laid before this House a list of all causes that have been heard by the Lord Chancellor, during the last eighteen years, wherein judgment has not yet been given, specifying the time when heard; comprising all petitions in cases of bankruptcy, already heard but not decided." The Chancellor was highly

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 556.

ORDER OF THE COMMONS.

incensed; and applied to the Ministers for information why such an order should have been permitted to pass, and whether or not he was to be protected by his colleagues. His colleagues advised him to despise his enemies, and to keep quiet. But he could do neither; as he avowed in a letter to Lord Liverpool in the following November, in which he repeated his complaints and demands, concluding with a threat of retiring on the meeting of parliament. Lord Liverpool's reply advises the Chancellor to wait at least till the obnoxious motions should be renewed: declares the intention of the Ministers to oppose it, by the mouth of Mr. Peel; adding,—“But in order to make it *possible* for him to carry his intention into effect, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry must be ready, and be laid before parliament immediately upon its meeting. . . . Let me entreat you, therefore, to spare no effort for the completion of this Report without further delay. It is really become a question of vital importance, and there is *no inconvenience* that ought not to be incurred for the attainment of this object. Independent of the complaint of *neglect*, and of the *suspicion* which the very delay in making the Report occasions, the Report is really necessary, in order to enable Ministers in the House of Commons to resist effectually the unjustifiable attacks daily made upon the Court of Chancery. . . . I hope I do not appear to press this matter with too much importunity; but I am so *deeply sensible* of its importance, that I should not do my duty if I did not urge it in the strongest manner. Let us have the Report, and all other difficulties may be fairly encountered: but, without that, no person (in the present heated state of the public mind upon the subject) can answer for the consequence.”

In truth, while the Chancellor was thanking God that he was well in health, and growing more easy and callous in mind every day, the same was far from being the case with the imprisoned debtors, the impoverished widows and orphans, and the broken-spirited gentlemen, who were suffering under the practical denial of justice by his court. The damp was spreading in the houses, and the weeds growing in the fields of the estates shut up by his delays; and the workhouses were receiving more and more of the paupers who ought to have been cheerful labourers on those estates. The introduction of the subject into parliament two years before had roused some hope: and with hope came restlessness; and the deferred hope was becoming as dangerous as the Premier intimated in his letter.

On the 18th of April, a petition from one of the sufferers was presented to the House; and another on the 21st: and on both occasions the Court and the Judge were attacked with great vehemence. Instead of retiring, however, as Lord Eldon had declared his intention of doing, on occasion of the expected stir, he preferred keeping himself “easy and callous.” “The Chancellor,” says his biographer, “was now become so far familiar with these annoyances as to endure them with considerable good-humour:”—a good-humour which was not reciprocated by the other parties in the case,—in the jail and the workhouse, and among the damps and weeds of dilapidated mansions. There was hope for them, however. The Commissioners' Report was ready: and it not only declared that the Court of Chancery had faults, and was capable of great improvement, but offered 187 propositions, containing the alterations in the practice of the courts which might, in the opinion of the Commissioners, be

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Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 561.
Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 564.

COMMISSION URGED
TO REPORT.

1826.

PETITIONS AND
DEBATES.
Hansard, xv. 298,
535.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 567.

REPORT OF COM
MISSIONERS.

1826.

adopted with advantage. As it was known that the Attorney-General was to introduce a bill founded on the Report, the subject was dropped for a month ; but not till the opinion of the public was effectually declared and recorded in the House, and in the reports of its debates. That opinion, at the date of its utterance, is an item of history which ought not to be passed over. It may be

Hansard, xv. 300.

most briefly conveyed in the words of Mr. Grenfell, spoken on the 18th of April, after some clamour in the House against Mr. Hume, who had said that he thought it the greatest curse that ever fell on any nation to have such a Chancellor, and such a Court of Chancery, as this country was visited with. "Mr. Grenfell said that he was not in the House when the words which caused this discussion were used. If his honourable friend had stated that the Lord Chancellor was a curse to the country, he had done that which was not altogether becoming in him, or any other member, to do. If his honourable friend had said that the Court of Chancery was a curse to the country, he had stated that which no man conversant with the subject could deny. It was only stating the current opinion of ninety-nine men out of every hundred. And he would tell the House the reason he had for holding that sentiment. It was because, by the practice of that court, a rich man was enabled to oppress, injure, and ruin a poor man. It was a mere engine of oppression ; and, constituted as that court was, it was not too much to say that it was a curse to the country."—This being, in the general opinion, the state of the case, the 187 propositions of the Commissioners might not be too many for the reforms needed. One of the hopeful and pleasant circumstances connected with the presentation of the Report was the testimony which it brought out to the conduct of the Chancellor during the preparation of the work. It showed what he could do when his mind was turned from its self-regards to business

Hansard, xv. 1256.

of real interest and importance. Dr. Lushington declared that from the beginning to the end of the investigation, the Lord Chancellor had afforded the most material assistance to the Commissioners. His connection with the Commissioners had left "a most favourable impression with regard to the learning, intelligence, and integrity of the noble lord. So far from ever seeking to check inquiry, he had done everything to promote and forward it."

LORD ELDON.

The chief complaint made, in the House and out of it, about the Report was, that it passed over in silence the causes of past delays of justice. This was believed by some to be attributable to the Chancellor's influence. There is little doubt that it arose from the tacit agreement in all minds, that these delays were caused by the peculiar quality of Lord Eldon's mind ; that hesitation and over-caution which made him, in his own time, the popular personification of Doubt, and which made him in his judicial capacity, so strange a contrast with himself in his political function, where he appeared rash in the extreme, in the obstinacy of his dogmatism. In his judicial function, where his business was to decide, he was ever doubtful and hesitating : while, in his political function, wherein he was called upon rather to confer than to decide, he was to the last degree oracular and peremptory. This was understood by everybody ; and the Commissioners relied upon that knowledge. It was also understood by everybody, that it was too late now to alter the quality of the Chancellor's mind. It was known that he was seventy-four years of age, and that he must soon surrender the seals either to

the King or to the King of kings: and it was hoped that a decorous silence on this point might, without injury, be preserved, from due respect to the grey hairs of the old judge. Dr. Lushington passed over this point as lightly as he could. He observed, that "any person who read the evidence would see that every witness was asked what was the cause of the delay, and also what were the best remedies for it. He was aware that some of them had felt great reluctance to answer that question; but he contended that the Commissioners could not have gone further, unless they had purposely sought for matter to criminate the Lord Chancellor. Having said thus much, he would proceed."

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Hansard, xv. 1256.

It was on the 18th of May that the Attorney-General moved for leave to bring in his Chancery-Reform Bill, founded upon the Report of the Commissioners. It was not discussed, as the dissolution of Parliament was known to be at hand; and it was understood that the motion proposed merely to lay the subject before the country, and recommend it to the succeeding parliament. Some correspondence among the ministers in the course of the autumn shows, not only their willingness to carry through such reform as should be decided on by the new parliament, but their anxiety to be ready for co-operation by having the requisite funds provided, or offered for purposes of compensation under the new arrangements which were contemplated. Thus was the great question of Chancery Reform, not only stirred, in the course of these three years, but brought up to the point of legislative action before the dissolution of the expiring parliament.

BILL PROPOSED.

Little more was done than has been already shown, during the last session of this parliament. The session was shortened by the approaching dissolution; and men's minds had little liberty from the engrossing subjects of the commercial crisis and the Catholic question. Many topics were more or less fully discussed; but their issues lay in future years. One decision, however, was made, with regard to the administration of justice in India, which is important enough to be recorded. By the words of the law, all British subjects were competent to serve on juries in India: but, by a custom now become too deeply rooted to be overthrown but by an express law, the half-caste population of India, now very numerous, were held disqualified as jurors, under the idea that they were not British subjects. By a bill passed this session, all "good and sufficient" residents were declared competent to serve on juries,—with the one reservation, that only Christian jurors should sit on the trials of Christians. Prejudice is ever stronger than law: and time and enlightenment must be waited for before our dark-skinned fellow-subjects in India could enjoy their due equality in the administration of justice; but the law had now done what it could in declaring the rights of the half-caste population; and further benefit might be hoped for, from occasion being taken by the introduction of the bill, to point attention to the good done in Ceylon, by the free admission of natives to serve on juries, under the administration of Sir Alexander Johnston.

JURORS IN INDIA.

Annual Register,
1826, p. 163.

With regard to matters of Finance, there was rather more than the usual amount of variation between the pictures offered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and opposition members. In the midst of the unquestionable and fearful distress of 1826, the Chancellor of the Exchequer continued to attract to himself his nickname of Prosperity Robinson. Every session,—no

FINANCE.

1826.

DIVERSE CONCLUSIONS.

matter whether the political weather was fair or foul,—he came down to the House exulting in his Budget;—exulting that his most sanguine expectations had been surpassed, or that his calculations had been unaffected by the misfortunes of the times. The Opposition members answered him with words of lamentation and foreboding;—lamentation at the deteriorating condition of the working classes, and forebodings that they would sink yet further, under the pressure of taxation. Superficial readers and hearers were amazed at so wide a difference of statement on what appeared to be a matter of figures. But figures have no more chance of being right than the merest conjectures, unless the premises on which they are to operate are well ascertained and agreed upon: and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his critics proceeded from different premises, and resorted to different tests to discover the real condition of the country. Mr. Robinson had taken off taxes:—all agreed that this was well. He had found that the reduced taxes had yielded more revenue just in proportion to their reduction:—wise men agreed that this was natural and right. He gloried in the excess of revenue above his calculations, and proceeded to take off more taxes:—wise men agreed to his proceeding, but questioned the grounds of his exultation. He argued, from the increase in the revenue, a vast improvement in the condition of the people; an improvement commensurate with the increase of revenue:—and here wise men thought him wrong. The difference was that Mr. Robinson compared the yield of the revenue merely with its yield in former years. His opponents considered also the great increase in the number of consumers. And a wide difference it was that there was room for here. All who took this element into their calculations, thought Mr. Robinson wrong:—some believed that the condition of the people was, on the whole, actually deteriorating: some that it was only not improving; some that it was improving more slowly than it ought to do;—and nowhere was any party found to sympathize fully in the exultation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at this time. After the census of 1831, it was found that, taking the nation all round, each person consumed one-seventh more of the necessaries and comforts of life which come under the heads of taxation, than at the beginning of the century; this small improvement having taken place chiefly during the latter years of this period. Such a fact is full of promise and satisfaction in itself; but the proportion of it which was true in 1826 would have been grievously disappointing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer;—disappointing to his benevolence, even more than to his pride.

Porter's Progress
of the Nation, c
iii p. 307.

Hansard, xii. 743.

TAXES REDUCED.

Hansard, xiii. 771.

Hansard, xiv.
1305.

The reductions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself enabled to propose in 1825 were on hemp, coffee, wine, spirits, and cider, and some of the assessed taxes which pressed on industry, and on the comfort of the working classes; among which, the most important were the house-tax on inhabited houses under £10 rent, and the window-duty on houses not having more than seven windows. An effort was made by Mr. Hobhouse to get the whole window-duty repealed: but this pernicious and most indefensible tax still subsists. These taxes together amounted to a little more than a million and a half. In 1826, March 13th, when the country was in a very suffering state, and when parliament was about to be dissolved, the Chancellor of the Exchequer passed in review our whole financial system for the preceding ten years, declaring

1826.

that there had been a reduction of taxation to the amount of twenty-seven millions and a half since the Peace. Some Opposition members,—Mr. Maberley, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Hobhouse the foremost,—protested against the statement that there had been any reduction at all,—the increase in the number of tax-payers so far exceeding the relief as that multitudes had been deprived of the use of articles of comfort and luxury who had formerly enjoyed them. Thus, though the yield of the duties on comforts and luxuries had so increased as to occasion the reduction of some of them, the enjoyment of these comforts by individuals had considerably lessened; and the country was therefore, if judged of by its consumption, in a declining state. The object of this opposition was to obtain a revision of Government expenditure, and a reduction in many national establishments. The object was not obtained: the House of Commons throwing out by a large majority the forty-seven resolutions offered by Mr. Hume, and the motion founded upon them. The sum of the resolutions was, “that the continued pressure of taxation has greatly increased the privations and distress of the productive, industrious, and labouring classes of the community:” and the resulting motion was for an address to the Crown, praying that his Majesty “would be graciously pleased to take into his consideration the present alarming state of the country, and to direct an immediate inquiry to be made into the causes of the existing distress, and the adoption of measures calculated to bring it to as speedy a termination as possible, and to prevent its further spreading.” The motion was lost by a majority of 152 to 51, on the 4th of May, within a month of the dissolution of parliament.

A more curious instance can scarcely be found than in the addresses of Prosperity Robinson and Adversity Hume of the opposite conclusions which may be drawn from a view of a statistical subject, where the figures were indisputable on both sides,—as far as they went. The discrepancy lay in the want of a common ground on which to base their calculations. The existing parliament, it is clear, thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer altogether in the right. In the Poor-law inquiry of subsequent years, it came out that all who had congratulated the nation on a pervading spread and increase of material prosperity had been widely mistaken.

Hansard, xv. 875.

MOTION ON THE
STATE OF THE
COUNTRY.

Hansard, xv. 897.

On the 31st of May, the session was closed by commission, the Speech declaring “that, the state of the public business enabling his Majesty to close the session at a period of the year the most convenient for a general election, it is his Majesty’s intention to dissolve, without delay, the present parliament, and to direct the issue of writs for the calling of a new one.” The Speech announced peace with the Burmese; declared that every endeavour had been used to preserve peace among the nations, in both hemispheres; and expressed deep concern at the distresses of the manufacturing classes at home, admiration at the patience with which those distresses had been generally borne, and a hope that the pressure was gradually giving way.

CLOSE OF SESSION.

Hansard, xv. 1411.

DISSOLUTION.

Thus was dismissed the seventh parliament of the United Kingdom, after a duration of six sessions. It had done some great things. The Commons had not had the opportunity of protecting the Queen, further than by announcing that they were ready to protect her; for her case had never reached them: but such indications as they had been able to give were on the right side. The great work of Parliamentary Reform had begun, with the enlarge-

THE LATE PAR-
LIAMENT.

1826.

ment of the representation of Yorkshire ; and that of the abolition of slavery with the issue of the celebrated circular to the West India colonies. Our country had been ennobled in the eyes of the world by the Foreign Policy of Mr. Canning, enthusiastically sanctioned by parliament ; and broad foundations had been laid for friendship with mankind at large, and prosperity at home, by a practical admission of the principles of Free Trade. There had been a reduction of taxation, considerable, though less than men of a later time would have achieved during ten years of peace. These were things actually done. A considerable, but indefinite progress had been made towards other great achievements, which were sure to be effected in time. Nothing was done for National Education, for Catholic Emancipation, for Emigration, for Chancery Reform, for the repeal of the Corn Laws, or for general Parliamentary Reform ; but these great topics had been discussed, and some of them diligently studied ; and all clear-sighted men knew that they were ripening for fruition, through all the gales of passion and frosts of indifference which retarded their growth. There could be no doubt that the country was in an advancing state, however severe the visitations of distress under which it was labouring at the end of the six years' term ; and however fearful the turbulence of some districts and classes from the withholding of political rights on the ground of religion. Much as there was yet to be done and undone, the improvement in our political state since 1820 was very striking. The cabinet was liberalised, and still liberalising ; and, in the train of the cabinet, the King. The House of Commons had grown wiser by its six years' experience, and under the influence of the genius of Mr. Canning,—imperfect as was that statesman's fidelity to his own genius in some points of high importance. And now, there was every reason to hope that the new parliament would be an improvement upon its predecessor ; and that the light which had been shed abroad in the diffusion of improved principles of policy would appear with some effectual concentration in the people's House, arranging their present affairs, and decreeing their future destiny with a clearer and more comprehensive knowledge than hitherto.

THE ELECTIONS.

The principal topics set up for tests at the elections, were the Corn Laws and Catholic Emancipation ; and, more partially, the Abolition of Slavery. The anti-Catholic strength rather gained than lost by the perturbation of the time. The uncompromised candidates said, with regard to the Corn Laws, what was usually said in those days,—that they would agree to what should be best for both grower and consumer : and the anti-Slavery test did not obtain much support. There was an opposition talked of to Mr. Huskisson at Liverpool : but the enemies of Free Trade could not find a candidate. Lord Howick and Mr. Beaumont failed in Northumberland, and Mr. Brougham in Westmoreland, where the Lowther interest put forth its strength. Some of the Radical demagogues tried their chance ; or rather, as Cobbett avowed, did their best to empty the purses of certain of the aristocracy. Cobbett himself stood for Preston, and polled nearly 1000 votes ; and Hunt opposed Sir Thomas Lethbridge, in Somersetshire ; of course, unsuccessfully. Lord John Russell failed in Huntingdonshire ; and the Bedford interest altogether succumbed for the time to the anti-Catholic spirit. As has been mentioned, the priests were active in Ireland, and wrought wonders,—overpowering the Beresford interest in Waterford.

One circumstance which makes the elections of 1826 memorable to those engaged in them was the excessive heat of the season. Deaths from sun-stroke were not confined to labourers in the field and on the road, but extended to persons engaged in the elections. There was difficulty in obtaining grass for horses, and even water for thirsty agents and electors. The effect of the drought upon the crops and the markets has been mentioned; and the consequent early summoning of the new parliament, in order to confirm the necessary alteration in the duties, and to grant an indemnity to Ministers for that alteration. As there was an average crop of wheat, and a very abundant one of potatoes, the alarm and inconvenience caused by the drought of the summer were not of long duration.

1826.

DROUGHT AND
HARVEST.

CHAPTER XII.

1820—26.

CAPITAL PUNISH-
MENTS.

IN casting the eye over the chronicles of these years, nothing is so painfully impressive as the frequent records of capital punishments. Even in these recent days, men were brought out upon the scaffold in batches, and hanged in rows. Boys of seventeen, hired for the adventure of stealing sheep, or to pass forged notes, were hanged with the strong-bodied burglar, and the hoary old coiner. The day before an execution, the gaol was crowded with the families of the doomed men come to bid them farewell. Six or eight wives together, who are to be widows to-morrow,—fifteen or twenty children, who are to be orphans to-morrow,—these were the moaning and weeping reprovers of our law, so barbarous at so late a day! Some ameliorations in the law had, as we know, taken place; but still, men were brought out in batches, and hanged in rows. The number of executions was fearfully on the increase; and yet, it was universally known that so much impunity was allowed, on account of the severity of the law, as materially to weaken the authority of law, and encourage crime.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GANG.

In 1826, a discovery was made of a gang of banditti who led a romantic life in Gloucestershire. In the neighbourhood of Wickwar, the inhabitants had suffered cruelly for seven years under incessant depredations, and the consequent pains of insecurity. The thefts were so various and vast as to indicate the co-operation of a large number of persons: but none of the stolen property was ever traced, nor any thief ever recognised. The police at last were set to arrest, almost at a venture, a family of the name of Mills;—an old man and his wife, and their four sons; and the confession of these people revealed the whole. The gang consisted of forty or fifty thieves, of whom thirty-one were immediately arrested. They had found or made a subterranean cavern of some extent, which was entered by a hole behind the fire-place in Mills's cottage,—the large pot concealing the aperture. Nearly fifty pounds' worth of half-crowns was found there; no less than twenty fitches of bacon, and furniture, cloth, and farm produce in plenty.

SMUGGLING.

The romance of smuggling was expiring, at the close of the period we have traversed. From the date of Mr. Huskisson's measures coming into operation, such tales of adventure began to decline. The plain prose of the matter is, that smuggling does not answer when duties are reduced to 30 per cent. *ad valorem*; and the poetry of the case was henceforth to be found in fictions of a preceding time, and in the traditional tales which haunt the Christmas hearth. The mournful romance of the Game Laws remained, however. In that direction men might still look for midnight murder, the raging of base passions, the filling of the gaols, and the corruption of the peasant's home.

GAME LAWS.

STOCKS.

Within this period, the last remaining stocks in London,—those belonging to St. Clement Danes in Portugal Street,—were removed. This ancient

1820—26.

instrument of punishment was henceforth to be looked for only in the bye-places of England,—in some nook of a village, or under some old park-paling,—green with lichens, and splintering away under rain and wind, or the pranks of children, playing with the boards and the holes which were once so awful. A new instrument of punishment had been previously introduced in gaols;—the tread-wheel, the very name of which was presently rendered detestable by the abuse of the invention. New inventions are usually stretched beyond due bounds; and this was the case with the tread-wheel. Not only men who had been unaccustomed to such muscular exertion as is necessary for ascending an interminable flight of stairs (which the work of the tread-wheel in fact is), were condemned to the same amount of treading as the most hardy, but women were put upon the wheel, long after the time which afforded ample proof that this was work totally unfit for women. It might appear to a stranger from another hemisphere a strange thing that we should boast of our Christian civilization, while we had such a spectacle to show as was seen even at a later time than this. An elderly lady, of good station and fortune, might be seen on the tread-wheel in Coldbath Fields prison, in the gaol dress, and with her hair cut close,—for the offence of shoplifting. It is difficult to write this fact: and it must be painful to read it: but the truths of the time must be told. During this period, the tread-wheel was in high repute; and the punishment might be applied at the discretion of the Justices of the Peace connected with each prison: and it was some time before many of them had the discretion to see and admit the gross inequality of the punishment, and therefore its essential badness when applied indiscriminately. It was employed chiefly for raising water and grinding corn: and sometimes the convicts were punished, over and above their sentence, by the mockery of being compelled to turn the wheel, to no purpose whatever.

TREAD-WHEEL.

In Ireland, the crimes of the early part of this period were as savage and atrocious as in any portion of the history of that unhappy country. It was in 1821, that the murder of the Shea family took place on the borders of Tipperary, when the whole farm-house and offices were burned, and seventeen persons thrust back into the flames, as often as they attempted to escape. The seventeen were the farmer himself and his wife, seven children, three female servants, and five labourers. The only offence alleged was, that Shea had brought some labourers from a neighbouring village to dig his potatoes, when his own tenants would neither pay their rent nor work it out. After the formation of the Catholic Association, there was a rapid diminution of crimes of outrage: and the leaders of the Association were no doubt justified in claiming the credit of the improvement. There is no ground for disputing their claim to have pacified the Catholic peasant population of Ireland for the time.

POPULAR IGNORANCE.

In England, evidences of popular ignorance abound during this period. In one place or another, from time to time, there was a demolition of machinery;—sometimes power-looms, and sometimes threshing machines: and we meet with one or two instances of the stack burning which became a rage, some years afterwards. Instances of fanaticism abound;—the Holy Land Pilgrims,—a sect of men who gave up their industry, and sold their property, to go to Jerusalem to meet the Lord; the followers of Joanna Southcote; the flying

1820—26. serpent of Dorsetshire and Devonshire which, in the shape of a black blight, poisoned the air; the sorcerer, Isaac Stebbings, who was ducked in a Suffolk village, in the presence of thousands; the drowning of children, "to put the fairy out of them;" and the desertion of Carmarthen fair, on the ground of the ancient prophecy of Merlin, that the town should be destroyed on the 12th of August, 1824; the cutting and carving of a witch at Taunton; and above all, the sensation about the miracles of Prince Hohenlohe. It is observable, however, that a large proportion of such popular delusion lies at the door of scientific and professional men, who ignore a class of facts which demand their serious attention; which stand out clearly as facts under the cognizance of society, and which, till scientifically investigated, will continue to afford material for popular fanaticism. The sympathies and operations of Prince Hohenlohe have never been explained away, to the satisfaction of philosophical minds, by the common talk of imposture and the influence of imagination; and they never can be, any more than the phenomena of somnambulism, second-sight, prevision and presentiments, which are found in all ages of the world, and all states of society. One of the greatest of physical inquirers, who died soon after this period, has left behind him a testimony which should be taken home as a lesson by those whose business it is to explore the mysteries of the human frame. Sir Humphrey Davy says, in his *Dialogue on Omens*, "In my opinion, profound minds are the most likely to think lightly of the resources of human reason; and it is the pert superficial thinker who is generally strongest in every kind of unbelief. The deep philosopher sees chains of causes and effects so wonderfully and strangely linked together, that he is usually the last person to decide upon the impossibility of any two series of events being independent of each other; and in science, so many natural miracles, as it were, have been brought to light . . . that the physical inquirer is seldom disposed to assert confidently on any abstruse subjects belonging to the order of natural things, and still less so on those relating to the more mysterious relations of moral events and intellectual natures." When scientific men, and those whose profession pledges them to the pursuit of physiological science, are open-minded and earnest enough to admit and study mysterious facts which occur before their eyes, popular fanaticism about sorcery and inspiration may give way; but, till this happens, not even the widest spread of popular education will give more than a check to the cruel follies of superstition.

BODY-SNATCHING.

One class of the violences of this period arose from the practice of Body-snatching. No sufficient provision was as yet made by law for the practice of dissection; a practice necessitated by the demands of science. Before it could be foreseen what this necessity must become, an unfortunate arrangement had been made by which disgrace and horror were associated with the process of examining the human body after death. The bodies of criminals were devoted for this purpose: and much time, and vigorous effort on the part of individuals, were required to overcome the prejudice thus originated. Meantime, as bodies must be had, there was nothing for it but taking them from the churchyards by night: a painful fear was spread over the whole class of survivors of those who were buried in the ordinary way; and affrays and police-cases in consequence, appear frequently in the records of the time.

The period under review was far behind our own in regard to liberty of thought, speech, and the press. The influence which had deprived the poet Shelley of the guardianship of his own children, and the state of public opinion which had countenanced that outrage upon nature, were still paramount: and we find a multitude of prosecutions for blasphemy, as well as for sedition, taking place; and the law refusing its protection to literary property, on account of opinions, statements, or merely representations therein contained. In 1822, Lord Byron's publisher was refused an injunction in Chancery to protect a poem of Lord Byron's from being pirated, on the ground of its appearing to contain blasphemous matter. This was not precisely the way to restrict the circulation of the poem: and thus it was bad, as a matter of policy. Moreover, as the author wrote to the publisher,—“Cain is nothing more than a drama, not a piece of argument.” We of the present day should add, that the law acts with tyranny and impolicy when it suppresses “argument,” on any subject whatever. In the same year, protection against piracy was refused by the Lord Chancellor to the “Lectures” of Mr. Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, a work of 600 pages on physiological subjects. The author was debarred from the fruits of his labour on the ground that some passages of the book discountenanced the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The Lord Chancellor thus did what he could to promote the circulation of cheap copies of a book which he considered dangerous. In the opinion of a subsequent time, he did a more dangerous thing, in discouraging freedom of research and of speech among men of science, who cannot work well in their function under the pressure of foregone conclusions, and the threat of outlawry. As Messrs. Shadwell and Wilbraham observed, in their pleading on the case, the liberty of the press was materially involved in the question: but, as the event proved, the liberty of the press must give way before the force of the Chancellor's “conscience” on matters of opinion.

PROSECUTIONS FOR
BLASPHEMY.

Annual Register,
1822, Chron. 62.

In the next year, Susanna Wright was brought up for judgment for having been instrumental in publishing a libel on the Christian religion. “She was neatly dressed, but appeared to have suffered in health from the imprisonment she had undergone.” She was sentenced to eighteen months’ imprisonment in Coldbath Fields prison, to pay a fine of £100, and find sureties at the end of the term, under pain of a longer imprisonment.

Annual Register,
1823, Chron. 18.

In the next year, eight shopmen of Richard Carlisle were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and to fines, for selling, in their employer's shop, “Paine's Age of Reason,” and three other works, termed “irreligious.” The results of this course of action soon proved to reasonable people that prosecutions like these did not tend to ennoble and endear Christianity to the very classes which were likely to be reached by these proscribed books. The Christianity of the state appeared in a tyrannical and most unloveable aspect, when it impoverished and imprisoned the needy and hard-working for offences against itself: and thus a new stimulus was given to the appetite for libel against Christianity. The Courts of Law, thus employed, were doing more for the dishonour of religion than was ever done by the contempt of the ignorant, and the invectives of the discontented, who had no knowledge of Christianity but in its abuses, and could not, therefore, influence any who had. Mr. Cobbett had reckoned on a greater prevalence of admiration for

Annual Register,
1824, Chron. 64.

1820—26. Thomas Paine than he found in England. He imported the bones of his favourite writer, in the expectation that they would be run after by sight-seers and purchasers who regarded Christianity as Paine did, and would receive his bones as saintly relics. But nothing came of it. The public laughed, and a niece of Paine's was naturally very angry; but Cobbett was made a bankrupt about that time: the bones were not exhibited, nor heard of again.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

LONDON UNIVERSITY.

The London Mechanics' Institute was founded in 1823: and in the next year was laid the first stone of the lecture-theatre. In 1825, the number of regular subscribers was 1185. In this year, there was a meeting of 120 gentlemen, who desired the formation of a university in London, to meet the wants of students who were precluded, either by religious opinion or mediocrity of fortune, from attending the existing universities. "The object of the Institution is," said the Prospectus, "to bring the means of a complete scientific and literary education home to the doors of the inhabitants of the metropolis, so that they may be enabled to educate their sons at a very moderate expense, and under their own immediate and constant superintendence." There are no incidents of the period under notice more cheering than these. It is true, neither of these institutions meets the great want of all, — the education of the absolutely ignorant, who form the largest proportion of society in England: but both aid in preparing the way to this all-important object. The London University educates a host of young men of the middle class, who, from generation to generation, must exalt the standard of education among the great body of Dissenters, hitherto but half-educated at the best; and who become the moving spirits of large classes which had hitherto lain below the surface of the prevalent learning of the time. And the value of Mechanics' Institutes in exciting and training the intellects of the fathers of the next generation of artisans and operatives can hardly be over-estimated. It is impossible but that the members of these institutes must be more anxious to procure education for their children, than if the advantages and charms of museums, libraries, lectures and reading-rooms had not been opened to themselves. At the time of the establishment of these institutes, the chief advantage contemplated was the most obvious one,—of opening means of knowledge to working men who desired it: but we, of a somewhat later time, see a yet more important result accruing in the exaltation of the idea of education in the popular mind, and the quickening of parental as well as personal desires for knowledge. The honour of originating these institutions belongs to Dr. Birkbeck more than to any other man: and to Mr. Brougham also great gratitude was throughout felt to be due. Dr. Birkbeck had been preparing for the great event of 1823 from the beginning of the century, by bringing together classes and audiences of working men, for instruction by lectures and mutual communication. His influence, and that of his coadjutors, always went to rouse the people to do the work for themselves, and not to wait for patronage or aid from the state. The response he met was hearty. Men of influence and high character presented themselves as leaders; and master mechanics and operatives flocked to the movement. Two-thirds of the Committee of the London Mechanics' Institute were working men: and a continually larger proportion of that class became directors, till, in eleven years from its formation, the directors were chosen

altogether by and from the general body, with no other restriction than certain conditions of membership. In a short time, many large towns—Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Coventry, &c.—opened Mechanics' Institutes; and then they spread into the central settlements of rural districts, where, by the establishment of branches, the circulation of books could be carried on. At Chichester, an institute numbered 400 members, and had two branches,—at Bognor and Selsey; and at Lewes there were 200 subscribers. The men of the present generation may well distinguish the year 1823 with a mark of honour in the catalogue of their years. 1820—26.

After the close of the war, and two deficient harvests in succession, Government had taken alarm at the number of unemployed labourers who burdened the country, and made a feeble attempt to relieve society at home by encouraging Emigration. They conveyed a small number of settlers to South Africa, and established them there. By the Custom-house returns, which are not very reliable, but the only data we have relative to that time, it appears that the sufferers took the matter very much into their own hands,—the number of emigrants to South Africa falling very short of that to our North American colonies, and soon appearing far below that to Australia. In 1820 (according to these returns) nearly 18,000 persons emigrated to our North American colonies, while 1,063 were conveyed to the Cape. As for the Australian settlements, the number of emigrants to them increased nearly threefold between 1821 and 1826. The total amount of emigration is seen to correspond with the state of affairs at home. In the sad years of 1820 and 1821, it was (leaving out the odd numbers) 19,000 and 13,000;—in the prosperous years of 1824 and 1825, it sank to 8,000 and 9,000: and in the disastrous year 1826, it suddenly rose to nearly 14,000, of whom nearly 13,000 went to our North American settlements. These are facts which clearly point out the duty of the state. There is evidently no question about whether emigration shall proceed;—no use in arguing now about whether it is a good thing or not. It proceeds; and its rate of procedure corresponds with the state of affairs at home. The question is, whether it shall go on well or ill; under kindly or cruel circumstances. In those days it was common, we might say usual, in the bad years, for the labourer to land on the distant shore with nothing but his empty hands, and his tribe of hungry children at his heels. We shall see hereafter what has been done in regard to the question whether such shall continue to be the method of British emigration, or whether every one who goes out shall set forth with an assurance of finding, at the end of his voyage, wherewithal to make a home,—land or employment, food, and a place in society. As we have seen, a committee of parliament was inquiring on this great question, at the expiration of the period under review.

A foreigner might point to the state of the chief Insurance Office in England at this time as a curious illustration of the prudential character of the English mind. The Equitable Insurance Office, though the chief, is only one among many in London; and the number in the country has been perpetually on the increase. In 1825, the vested capital of the Equitable was upwards of eleven millions; and of this amount, nearly nine millions had accumulated in twenty-one years. In 1821, the sums insured against fire, in the United Kingdom, amounted to more than £400,000,000. There are no means of knowing

EMIGRATION.
Progress of the
Nation, sec. i. c. 5,
p. 128.

FIRE AND LIFE
INSURANCE.

Annual Register,
1825, Chron. 96.

Progress of the
Nation, sec. vi.
c. 2, p. 123.

1820—26. precisely the amount of money on life insurance in the hands of the offices of the kingdom: but it is believed to amount to forty millions. In looking at these facts as an indication of national character, we must bear in mind that the amount of insurance of life and from fire would undoubtedly have been much larger throughout, but for the indefensible tax which has ever acted as a discouragement to this wise method of saving.

Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 131.

MENAI BRIDGE.

Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 14.

FIRST CHAIN
BRIDGE.

CALEDONIAN
CANAL.

NEW LONDON
BRIDGE.

Annual Register,
1823, Chron. 59.
GAS.

THAMES TUNNEL.
Annual Register,
1826, Chron. 27.

CAMBRIDGE OB-
SERVATORY.

The progress of the arts of life during this period was such as to answer to all reasonable expectation. In May, 1820, a young lady under age received by her trustees a sum of between £26,000 and £27,000, as compensation for the loss of custom at Bangor Ferry; which ferry had, up to this time, yielded the young lady £900 a year. This was in preparation for the erection of the Menai Bridge, which was opened on the 30th of January, 1826, at half-past one in the morning. The resident engineer undertook to conduct the mail across: and he had for his staff as many persons as could hang upon the coach. "Amidst the blaze of lamps, the cheers of those assembled, and the roaring of a heavy gale of wind, the gates were thrown open, and the mail passed triumphantly across." There was a throng on the bridge throughout the next day: and truly, it was a work worthy of admiration. The height from the high-water line was 100 feet: and the length of the chains was 1,600 feet.

The first Chain Bridge in Great Britain, however, had been completed nearly six years before. It was the work of Capt. S. Brown, R.N., and was thrown across the Tweed where the width of the river was 437 feet from bank to bank. In 1822, the Caledonian Canal was opened, after the labour of twenty years, and the sum of £900,000 had been spent upon it. The canal might or might not turn out a good speculation; but there could be no doubt of the character of the population of the wastes along its course having changed remarkably in the progress of the work. Regular and well-paid employment, and intercourse with able workmen brought from a distance, had roused them from a state of torpor and ignorance, and given them habits of industry and pleasures of intelligence never dreamed of before.

On the 12th of September, 1823, the Bridge-house Committee, in contemplation of a new London bridge, met at Guildhall to consult, and adjourned to the top of Fishmongers' Hall, to look about them, and determine where they would put their new bridge. It was to be as near to the old one as possible: and the old bridge was to stand till the new one was completed. The first stone was laid in June, 1825, by the Lord Mayor, in the presence of the Duke of York. Mr. Rennie, the architect, was the true hero of the day. At the close of our period the works were in great forwardness, and the first stone on the Southwark side had been laid at the beginning of January, 1826.

In 1823, we find that the length of streets lighted with gas in the metropolis was 215 miles; and that nearly 40,000 public gas lamps were lighted by the three principal companies.

In 1826, the Thames Tunnel was fairly begun,—the first shaft having been actually united with the commencement of the Tunnel.

Cambridge University was henceforth to have an Observatory; the senate having decreed, in 1820, that one should be built, and furnished with instruments,—voting on the spot £5,000 towards the cost.

The Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh purchased, in 1825, a fine Danish

library from Copenhagen; and in the next year, the Astorga library, the finest collection of Spanish books of law, chronicles, and romance, existing out of Spain. This library, founded by the Marquess Astorga, Viceroy of Portugal under the administration of Olivarez, consisted of 8,000 volumes, and was purchased for £3,000.

1820—26.

ASTORGA LIBRARY.

Annual Register, 1826, Chron. 11.

FIRST OBELISK FROM EGYPT.

In 1821 arrived the first Egyptian Obelisk seen in this country. It is one of the pair standing at the entrance of the avenue to the Temple at Philæ,—the Holy Island of the Nile, on the borders of Nubia. It is of great value, from the curious matter contained in its inscriptions, which could not be read in London at the time it was brought over: and the privilege of possessing it seems to be enhanced by its having been very nearly lost in the act of removal. A pier on the river bank gave way under its weight, and it slipped into the Nile: but Belzoni, the traveller, recovered it very skilfully; and we next hear of it lying at Deptford, surrounded by artists who were eagerly making drawings from it, for engraving purposes. The old priests of the Holy Island, whose petition to Ptolemy it bears engraved, would have been astonished and dismayed if they could have foreseen how far it was destined to travel.

Annual Register, 1821, Chron. 148.

The art of lithographic printing was beginning to spread at this period; so that we read of patents being taken out for lithographic presses. The importance of the invention may have been exaggerated in the enthusiasm of its first introduction: but there can be no question of its having wrought well in presenting to the popular eye works of art, of a quality, and in a multitude, which could never have been enjoyed without the discovery of such a method of cheap engraving. The utility of the art in other ways,—in multiplying copies of manuscript, &c.—is so great as to entitle the first popular use of the art of lithography to notice in a history of the time.

LITHOGRAPHIC PRINTING.

In 1824, the most eminent men in London and Edinburgh,—including the members of the government,—met to do honour to the memory of James Watt, as the benefactor of his country and his kind. The Prime Minister, who opened the business at the London meeting, declared himself charged with a message from the King;—that if it should be determined on to erect a monument to James Watt, his Majesty would head the list with a subscription of £500. The Edinburgh meeting was led by Sir Walter Scott and Lord Jeffrey. Everywhere, the foremost men seemed eager to honour the great benefactor who has done so much for the material interests of society. His statue now graces Westminster Abbey, where he may, by some, be thought to hold a middle rank between the Edwards and Henries who lie there glorious in their regality, and the higher sovereigns,—the kings of mind whose memorials sanctify the Poet's Corner.

WATT'S MONUMENT.

Annual Register, 1824, Chron. 76-84.

In every period of modern history there seems to be something to record of our increased knowledge of the globe on which we live. Now that we were at peace, there was leisure and energy disposable for projects of geographical discovery.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERY.

In 1820, some naval officers on the coast of South America reported home that an Antarctic Continent, or long series of islands, of whose existence an ancient rumour is reported, had been discovered by the master of a Northumberland trading vessel,—by name, Smith. It had always been the custom for our trading vessels, and, as it appears, for those of other nations, to keep

ANTARCTIC LAND. Annual Register, 1820, p. 1366.

1820—26.

as near as possible to Cape Horn in passing into the Pacific. Mr. Smith, in command of the *William*, traversed a higher latitude, and fell in with a line of coast, which he followed for two or three hundred miles, and which he named New South Shetland,—landing to take possession in the name of his country. He found the climate temperate, the coast mountainous, and bearing an occasional growth of firs and pines. He passed large bays which abounded with the spermaceti whale and seals. A party of naval officers afterwards accompanied him in his vessel, to verify and certify his discovery; and New South Shetland has since appeared in the maps of the world. This discovery was accidental at first, however well followed up: but our North Polar knowledge was the result of express research. In 1820, Captain Parry reported his discovery that Baffin's Bay was no bay at all; he having found in its western coast a passage into the Polar Sea. Upon this, an expedition was fitted out for purposes of further exploration of the Arctic Circle; and rewards were offered by Government:—£5,000 to the first ship which should reach 130° West long.: £5,000 more to the first ship which should reach 150° West long.: and a further sum of £10,000 to the first ship which should reach the Pacific by the North-West Passage. Smaller rewards were offered for the attainment of high degrees of latitude. The result of this expedition was the discovery of the Strait of the Fury and Hecla, and the ascertainment generally that the land in those regions consists of a vast archipelago,—one of the largest on the globe, of which Greenland may be considered the mainland. An overland expedition was sent at the same time, under the command of Captain Franklin, to explore the Coppermine River, and the coasts extending east and west of its mouth. In 1824, Captain Parry was sent again. From these and subsequent expeditions, the northern coast of the American Continent has become clearly defined, and the existence of a passage from ocean to ocean satisfactorily made out, though it is not yet known to have been traversed by any one person.

NORTH POLAR
EXPEDITIONS.Annual Register,
1821, Chron. 36.INTERIOR OF
AFRICA.

Considerable additions were made, during these years, to our knowledge of the interior of Africa. In 1823, Lieutenant Clapperton was employed, with Major Denham and Dr. Oudney, to explore a part of the African interior by proceeding south from the Mediterranean shore. Dr. Oudney soon died; but his two companions penetrated more than 1,500 miles (in a measured straight line), to Lake Tchad and the town of Soccato. In the great fresh-water Lake Tchad they saw huge hippopotami, and elephants, and other mighty beasts on its banks. At Soccato, they found crockery and other ware, with the names of English makers upon them. They offer a much more favourable picture of African civilization in the interior than had been looked for. Besides this important piece of knowledge,—important as affecting the destinies of the African race all over the globe,—these travellers have given to the world much information about the territory round Lake Tchad, and south and west of it. On this occasion, the results repaid their hardships,—which were great: but their attempts to discover the course and rise of the Niger were unsuccessful. In 1825, Clapperton, being raised to the rank of Commander, set forth again, with several companions and servants, to explore the same region from the southern side: but this expedition terminated disastrously, the whole party dying except Richard Lander, the faithful servant of Captain Clapperton.

The master might have survived with his servant, but for his detention at Soccattoo for many months by the king, his old acquaintance. He died within four miles of Soccattoo, in April, 1827. 1820—26.

It is impossible to read the records of these years without being struck by the number of earthquakes, storms, eclipses, and volcanic eruptions, and the recurrence of extraordinary drought. Some causes, unknown to science,—unknown, that is, in their mutual relations,—appear to have been at work, to produce remarkable effects in earth, air, and sea. In 1820, a new crater opened on Mount Vesuvius: and there were earthquakes in various parts of the globe. In England, and throughout Europe, the summer was intensely hot. On the 7th of September happened the great eclipse,—the greatest in the memory of the existing generation,—which drew away the peers and listeners in the House of Lords, while the Queen's trial was proceeding. In the next year, there were rains so heavy as to cause floods in many districts of the kingdom. That at Westminster rose four inches above the great flood of 1774. On the 26th of April of this year, the thermometer (at Cambridge) in the shade, with a N.E. aspect, stood at the extraordinary height of 73 degrees. Earthquakes occurred in the south of England: and two in the west of Ireland were followed by landslips, very disastrous to the residents. In the next year, there was an earthquake in Yorkshire; and also at Lisbon and Ancona; but the distinguishing calamity of the year was the destruction of Aleppo, by successive shocks which lasted for three days. Many other towns in the neighbouring regions were destroyed also: but at Aleppo, the immediate destruction was reckoned at upwards of 25,000 lives. Two rocks rose up in the Mediterranean, making islets near Cyprus. In the autumn, Naples was threatened by an eruption of Vesuvius, of extraordinary violence,—four rivers of lava flowing out from old and new craters. A volcano in Iceland began to stir, twice in the same year, coating large districts with layers of ashes. It was the turn of the western world, the next year. On the coast of Chili, the sea suddenly sank twelve feet, and by the trembling of the earth, for a succession of many hours, the city of Valparaiso was destroyed. In 1834, Persia was the scene. Many towns, of which Shiraz was the chief, were swallowed up or overthrown, with the greater number of their inhabitants. After some extraordinary storms which seemed to spring up about the coasts of England and Holland during the summer, the disasters of the year were closed by a hurricane which swept over the North Sea, wrecking all the ships on the coast of Jutland, and then traversed Sweden, mowing down the forests which opposed its course. The waters of the Baltic were swept into the Gulf of Finland; and St. Petersburg was almost drowned in the rise of the Neva. The destruction of life, lands, houses, and goods, was beyond all estimate. Earthquakes continued through the two following years: and the heat of the summer in Europe was such as to cause much conjecture as to the reasons of the changes in the temperature of the seasons. Horses dropped dead in the streets of our towns, and men in the fields. Upon the heat followed, as usual, storms, and the fatal fires which it is so difficult to check after long drought. On the side of one of the Grampians, a spark caught the dried moss, and the fire spread for above a fortnight. At one time, the mass of fire was from five to seven feet deep in the moss, extending over an area of seven miles by five. On

REMARKABLE
SEASONS.

1820—26. account of the heat, no one could approach to take measures for extinguishing it : and it burned itself out at last. During these years of elemental turmoil, men felt as singular a sense of precariousness,—with the globe groaning and heaving under their feet, and meteors flashing and storms rushing about their heads,—as we may suppose a race of ants to feel, when man comes with his candle and his gunpowder to blow up their settlement. Amidst the conflicting forces of nature, man felt as powerless as they.

WINDSOR TERRACE RE-OPENED.

One incident of the new reign, not quite unimportant, was that Windsor Terrace was once more open to the public, as a consequence of the death of the old King. There, in the days of the last century, he used to walk, with his young family around him, in the presence of a crowd of gazing subjects. There, in his latter days he walked, blind, secluded, and with benighted mind, so that for him the sun seemed not to shine, and the glorious landscape stretching below might as well have been blotted out. Now, the place was again opened to the public ; but not, as formerly, for loyal subjects to greet their King. George IV. could not submit to the observances of royalty which required his meeting his people. He secluded himself more and more, from morbid feelings of indolence and self-indulgence. From a letter of Lord Eldon's we learn how his Ministers disliked and disapproved of this growing indolence. "There was what is called a grand review in Hyde Park yesterday (July 10th, 1824). The Duke of York was, I hear, very popular, and prodigiously cheered. My Royal Master was in Carlton House : *i. e.*, within half a mile of this scene, but did not approach it. It is astonishing what is lost by this sort of dealing, and it is grievous that popularity which might be so easily earned, and acquired at so small an expenditure of time and trouble, should not only not be secured, but a feeling of disgust and reproach be engendered towards a person with respect to whom a very different feeling most easily might and ought to be created." While the King was thus negligent of his personal popularity, his Ministers and Parliament did an act which secured, among some eminent families, a grateful attachment towards the House of Brunswick. By a reversal of attainders, five families were, in 1824, restored to their ancestral honours, forfeited by rebellion in the last century :—the Jerninghams, Erskines, Gordons, Drummonds, and Nairns : and in 1826, Acts were passed restoring the peerages of Earl of Carnwath, Earl of Airlic, Lord Duff, Lord Elcho, and the Baronetcy of Threipland of Fingark.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 526.

REVERSAL OF ATTAINERS.
Annual Register,
1824, p. 61

Annual Register,
1826, p. 107.

MUSICAL FESTIVALS.

It was during the period under notice that Musical Festivals were instituted : and these, and every other signal advance in the love and practice of Art, may be regarded as direct consequences of the Peace. The opening of the Continent gave a vast stimulus to the artistic mind of England : and the choral music of Germany was as striking a revelation of the power of Art to qualified travellers as the picture galleries of that country, France, and Italy. By the Festivals of York, Norwich, Birmingham, and Worcester, music of a high order was offered to multitudes of the middle classes, some time before London could yield music which, in the mass, could be compared to it : and subsequent times have shown that thus was awakened in the English people a dormant faculty, whose training is a most important auxiliary to true civilization. If we now observe anywhere among our people a tendency to musical pursuit, stimulating the intellect, and softening the manners, like the musical faculty

of the Germans, we must date its rise from the institution of Musical Festivals after the Peace,—though these could never, of themselves, have effected what has been done since by efforts of another kind, for the popular musical education of England. The funds raised by these gatherings for the support of charities are an important benefit: but it is perhaps a greater that music of an elevating character has been carried into thousands of English homes.

The King, on his accession, favoured the institution of a Royal Society of Literature, to serve “as a rallying point for concentrating and diffusing information, by a union of persons of similar tastes and pursuits:” and for purposes of literary patronage. The King declared his intention of devoting a thousand guineas a year to pension ten Associates of the society; and the society agreed to contribute a similar sum to pension ten more. These Associates were to be men of eminent literary ability and good character, the poverty of whose circumstances would make the allowance of one hundred guineas a year acceptable to them. The society was also to promote the publication of inedited remains of ancient literature, and of works of a valuable but not popular character; to reward literary merit by honorary tokens; to establish a correspondence with men of letters abroad; and in every way to promote the character and progress of literature. The scheme advanced slowly; so that it was June, 1823, before the first general meeting of the society was held, when its objects and constitution were declared to the world by some of the first men of the day.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF
LITERATURE.
Annual Register.
1820, Chron. 539.

Two curious discoveries were made in the State Paper Office in the years 1824 and 1826. It appears that while Milton was secretary to Cromwell, he must have deposited or left in this office the MS. of his Latin treatise on Christian Doctrine, which had been known to exist, but could never be found. It was now brought to light by Mr. Lemon, of that office. It was contained in an envelope, addressed to Cyriac Skinner, Merchant. Of course, it immediately fixed the attention of the learned; and it was soon published: but its contents, set forth in the great poet's bold and free style, were too heterodox for the taste of the learned of the modern time; and, on account of the Arianism of the doctrine, and some startling views on divorce and other subjects, it was consigned, as far as was possible, to neglect. The other discovery was of some autograph MSS. of Queen Elizabeth, and of her secretary. These consisted of an entire translation of Boethius, and poetical versions of Horace, by the Queen. With these came to light a mass of documents relating to the reign of Henry VIII.; and especially his proceedings in regard to his divorced wives.

Annual Register.
1824, 278*; 1826,
Chron. 75.
MILTON'S MS.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S MSS.

While a new work of Milton was presented to his countrymen, his great poems were introduced to the homes of a far distant people,—the dwellers in a remote island, “far, far amid the melancholy main.” The long winters of Iceland are cheered by literary enjoyments, like the milder seasons of southern lands: at this time, while the new volcano was pouring out flames, and covering the reeking plains of Iceland with ashes, the harmless and genial flame of Milton's genius was beginning to kindle hearts within a thousand households. This, indeed, is fame! The translator of “Paradise Lost” into the Icelandic tongue was Thorlakson, a native poet, who died at Copenhagen in 1820.

MILTON IN ICE-
LANDIC.

The losses of our country by death were very great, during the seven years

LOSSES BY DEATH

1820—26.

LORD MALMES-
BURY.

LORD ERSKINE.

LORD ST. VINCENT.

HERSCHEL.

SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

ARTHUR YOUNG.

DAVID RICARDO.

of this period. Besides the statesmen whom we have seen to disappear in the course of our history, there were others who dropped quietly away, from being at the time not engaged in the public view. The old Lord Malmesbury, who has told us so much of the events and details of British policy during the last century, and who wooed the unfortunate Caroline of Brunswick for the Prince of Wales, died towards the close of 1820. Lord Erskine died in 1823, leaving behind him the remembrance and tradition of an eloquence which his admirers believed to be absolutely singular. In the same year departed an old admiral, whose mere name seems to carry us back to the naval warfare of a preceding century,—Earl St. Vincent, who nearly reached the age of ninety.

Of philosophers, there died the great Herschel, who in middle life passed over from his passionate love of music to attend to the finer harmonies of the stars in their courses. He learned many secrets of the heavens, and made them known to men; and in acknowledgment, his name is written in light in the heavens themselves. The remotest known planet of our system is symbolised by the initials of his name. He left us not only his knowledge, but the means of gaining more. His great telescope at Slough was the wonder of his time; and it will continue to be so, however science and art may enable men to improve the powers of the instrument. He died in 1822, in his 84th year. Sir

Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, died in 1820, after a long and useful life spent in seeking and diffusing the knowledge of nature, and in encouraging in others the pursuit of natural science. In the same year died one whose pursuits class him at once among the philosophers and the travellers,—Arthur Young, the great master in agriculture. His researches in agriculture led him to observe much of the political and social condition of the people of every country in which he travelled; and it is remarkable that he published, in 1769, a work on the expediency of a free importation of corn. Whatever he said was attended to by some of the sovereigns of Europe, as well as peers and commoners: and his power was great, in his day, over the practice of agriculture, from Russia to Spain, and over the imposition of taxes at home, which are in any way related to agriculture. While he was burned in effigy in one place, he was receiving honorary medals in another. He might be sometimes mistaken, and somewhat apt to exaggerate methods and advantages which presented themselves strongly to his mind: but no one questioned his influence, or his innocent ardour in a most important pursuit. He held, at the time of his death, the office of Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, though he had been blind for ten years. He was in his 80th year.

The country had a great loss in the death of David Ricardo, who died, not in the ripe old age of the philosophers we have been registering, but in his 56th year; and just at a time (1823) when his influence in parliament was beginning to manifest itself in the changed spirit of legislation on economical subjects; and when, moreover, the new men who had entered the cabinet were those who could give wide practical effect to his philosophy. He did all that an independent member could do, and more than it could have been anticipated that any independent member could do, to accelerate the progress of enlightened legislation during his short parliamentary career: and his writings effected even more outside the walls of parliament than his influence within. He was missed and lamented for many years, by ministers, parliamentary comrades, and the

public ; and especially during the Bank follies and crash of the years immediately succeeding his death. If any one could have made sound doctrine heard, and have checked the madness of the time, by keeping the House of Commons in its senses, it was he ; but he was gone ; and our world was sorely the worse. 1820—26.

The Travels of Dr. Edward D. Clarke were read with avidity in their day ; and they answered some good purposes in arousing the curiosity, and stimulating the imagination of the English reading public, whose faculties had been kept too much at home by the long protraction of the war. These books opened new regions to the fancy, and acted in some degree as works of the imagination do. And so they might ; for they were truly works of fiction to a considerable extent. Since those days, scientific travelling has become something which the world was not then dreaming of : and certainly Dr. Clarke never dreamed of painstaking in research, or care in relating his adventures. He travelled because he was too restless to keep still : and he had been too indolent as a student to be qualified to use the best privileges of foreign travel. His observation was superficial, and his representations inaccurate. Therefore, his works are now neglected, if other travellers have been over the same ground, though they were, in their day, attractive and popular enough to make for him a considerable reputation. He died in 1822, in the 54th year of his age. Another traveller, Belzoni, who died in the next year, may be considered English enough to be classed among the national losses, though he was born at Padua, and died in Africa. He lived much in England, regarded our country as his home more than any other, and enriched it with some precious fruits of his Egyptian researches. To him we owe a great part of the Egyptian discoveries made in recent years ;—the opening of the precious rock-temple of Abou Simbel, and of the tomb of Osirei at Thebes ; and of many monuments which, but for him, would have been buried still in the sands of the desert. He was a man of mighty stature and great strength, courage, and hardihood. He was himself reliable while he believed few other people to be so ; for his temper was suspicious and jealous. He had no scholarship. His business lay in another direction. It was for him to discover and bring to hand what scholars were to attest and reason upon : and his function was no mean one, as will be agreed by all who are aware what it is to have to deal with wild Arabs in wildernesses of rock and sand. Such a man will always be felt to have departed too soon while any part of the ancient world remains to be uncovered to modern eyes. His age is not known : but he was about to make a youthful sacrifice of himself to the monastic life at Rome, when the entrance of the French, in 1798, compelled a change of purpose. He was thus, probably, only a little above fifty when he died in December, 1823. Another Egyptian traveller, Sir Frederick Henniker, died at an early age, in 1825. He was only thirty-one. Among his adventures abroad was one which befel him on the road going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when robbers stripped and wounded him, and left him for dead. He published a volume of notes of his travels, after his return, settling down as lord-lieutenant of the county of Essex, and colonel of the local militia. His book of travels is accurate and interesting. Sir Stamford Raffles died in 1826. He was only forty-seven years of age ; but he had done great things during his too short life. He it was who acquired Java for us,

DR. E. D. CLARKE.

BELZONI

SIR F. HENNIKER.

SIR T. STAMFORD
RAFFLES.

1820—26. and governed it during the time that it belonged to Great Britain. He abolished slavery there, advanced in every way the welfare of the native population, and gave us a great amount of knowledge of those parts of the world, though his collections and journals, and all that he had, was lost by shipwreck on his return home. He did almost as much for Sumatra as for Java, especially by abolishing slavery; and we owe to him the establishment of one of the most important commercial settlements in the world,—that of Singapore, which may be considered the key of the great far-eastern world. His last service to his country was establishing the British Zoological Society. The geographer Arrowsmith, who visits all English households in the shape of the best maps of the time, died in 1823, in a good old age. And in the same year we lost the great Jenner, who waged war against disease with greater success, as we believe, than any other physician who ever lived. Lady Mary Wortley Montague supposed she was rendering a great service to humanity, and was long supposed by all to have done so, by introducing the practice of inoculation for the small-pox: and this was true, in as far as she communicated the idea of inoculation in any mode. But the ravages of small-pox became incalculably greater in consequence of her method, from the infection being always kept up, and spread abroad, to seize upon all who were predisposed to the disease. Dr. Jenner put together the facts of inoculation and of the exemption from small-pox of the Gloucestershire milkers who had taken the cow-pox from their cows, and tried the experiment of inoculation for cow-pox, which has banished all dangerous degrees of small-pox wherever it has extended. He freely gave to the world his discovery of vaccination, and thus made himself one of the greatest of human benefactors. He reached the age of seventy-five.

Of actors, we lost in this period, John Kemble, the emperor of his art; and Incedon, whose ballad singing was singularly suited to the English taste of the last century.

Of artists, we lost some whom it grieved the heart of the nation to part with. The noble-hearted and gentle Flaxman died in 1826, at the age of seventy-one. Among his great benefits to his kind, it was one of the greatest,—though he was wholly unconscious of it,—that he showed in his whole life what the happiness of genius is, when allowed its full and free action. He had all the genuine attributes of genius;—its purity, its generosity, its benevolence, its candour, its industry, its patience under God and towards man: and he was one of the happiest of men,—joyous in his labours, blessed in his marriage, and serene in the contentment of his mind, and the simplicity of his life. His friends loved him almost to a point of idolatry. He brought to the general English mind, through the eye, the conceptions of Homer, Æschylus, and Dante; and presented, in fresh nobleness and beauty, many a sacred image from the Scriptures. Working alone and in silence, in a spirit of monastic holiness, he was the effectual preacher of a wider church than walls can contain, or than can be reached by any other voice than that which appeals to the soul.—The sculptor Nollekens died in 1823, having attained the objects of his life in a greater degree than is usual. These objects were, first, money, and then fame; and he also desired long life. He lived to the age of eighty-six; left more than £200,000 behind him, and enjoyed a considerable reputation. His great natural powers had no fair chance against the drawbacks of a

defective education, and an overwhelming tendency to acquisitiveness. He pursued a lower style of art than his powers would have fitted him for, if he had been morally wiser ; and his latter days were passed among the unsatisfactory attentions of suspected legacy-hunters. He knew that he was admired by many ; and, for some qualities, truly, though partially esteemed : but he must have known that he was not loved. Thus, while occupied through a long course of years with the ideas and labours, he missed the best privileges of the artist life.—Another eccentric man and artist who died during this period, was Fuseli, the *protégé* of Reynolds, the beloved of Mary Wollstonecraft, the friend of Lavater and Bonnycastle. It was his earnestness which made his power and his fame. Exhibited in familiar subjects, and those which should be simply natural, it was grotesque enough ; and the more so from the imperfection of both his drawing and his colouring ; but when infused into his preternatural subjects,—his “Nightmare,” and “Sin pursued by Death,” it is very impressive. His great service to society was in presenting to it his own originality, and in rousing attention to the arts of design and invention, at a time when our insular seclusion was unusually close, and the inferior departments of art naturally engrossed a disproportionate attention over the higher. He was as eccentric in his mind generally as in his heart : but he had friends about him all his life, who thought it worth while to bear with his strange temper, for the sake of his goodness in other respects. His domestic life was happy : and this peace at home, together with his habits of industry and temperance, had, no doubt, great effect in procuring him excellent health and long life. He was eighty-seven when he died, in 1825.—Benjamin West was an American by birth ; but he died (1820) President of our Royal Academy. As an historical painter he stood very high, if not unrivalled, in this country, from his inventive power ; though he was as feeble in expression as in colouring. Like so many of his brethren in art, he was simple and virtuous in his life, of devoted industry ; and he lived to a great age ; eighty-two years. He painted or sketched about 400 pictures : and when we consider how large some of these are, and how thronged with figures, we shall see that his life must have been spent chiefly in his painting-room. His greatest works are from Scriptural subjects ;—“Christ Healing the Sick,” “Christ Rejected,” and “Death on the Pale Horse.”—One of the most eminent of our portrait-painters, Sir Henry Raeburn, died in 1823. His portraits are full of life, vigour, and prominence ; and they are admirable as likenesses. He received his knighthood on the visit of George IV. to Edinburgh, and was appointed his portrait-painter for Scotland ; but he died the following year.—William Sharp, the eminent line-engraver, died in 1824, in a good old age. He was mainly self-taught, and was wont to declare that his first attempts at engraving were made on a pewter pot. To him we owe the practice of illustrating, in a worthy manner, the eminent authors of our literature. Sharp was a great radical ; and in Horne Tooke’s time, was repeatedly brought before the Privy Council. He was a man not easily frightened, however ; and he used his opportunity to canvass Mr. Pitt and others of the Council for subscriptions to his forthcoming engraving of Kosciusko’s portrait. They could not command their countenances to deal severely with him after this ; and they let him go. He was, with all his jocularly of temper, ardour in his profession, and good sense on most subjects,

1820—26.

FUSELI.

WEST.

RAEBURN.

WILLIAM SHARP.

1820—26. singularly superstitious,—believing that the end of the world was at hand, and bringing up Joanna Southcote to London, and maintaining her there. In middle life, he might have become an Associate of the Royal Academy; but he took up the cause of some other eminent engravers, less favoured than himself, in a manner which offended Sir Joshua Reynolds, who dropped his claims and his acquaintance.

ANGERSTEIN.

Some lovers and patrons of Art, who were, on that ground, benefactors of society, died during this period. Mr. Angerstein was born in Russia, but, from the age of fourteen, spent his life in England, and was a most useful citizen, in other ways besides accumulating his splendid collection of pictures. He is believed to have saved the credit of the country in the commercial crisis of 1793, by his proposal of an issue of Exchequer Bills; and it was through him that the discovery of the life boat was established and rewarded. His collection of pictures was purchased by Government for £57,000, to be the foundation of a National Gallery of paintings. Mr. Angerstein died in 1823, at the age of 91.—Mr. Payne Knight died in the next year, bequeathing his collection of medals, drawings, and bronzes,—worth £30,000,—to the British Museum. Mr. Knight was an eminent Greek scholar, and of high cultivation in every way: and his accomplishments were ennobled by a magnificent public spirit.—The Duchess of Devonshire, who died in the same year, devoted her whole fortune to the promotion of the Arts. She caused excavations to be made at Rome, which restored to light many precious relics of antiquity that might otherwise have lain buried for ever.—In another way, the Duchess of Rutland,—who died in 1825, in middle life,—was a benefactress of the Arts and of society: she built Belvoir Castle, superintending its erection for twenty-five years with a vigilant interest and taste. All the neighbouring villages and lands were in a constant state of improvement through her care: and she obtained many premiums from the Society for the Promotion of Arts and Manufactures, for her agricultural improvements and skill in planting. It is no wonder that a multitude of weeping mourners followed in her funeral train.

DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.

MRS. BARBAULD.

There were women among the authors who died during this period whom the world was sorry to part with. The venerable Mrs. Barbauld, whose writings were small in bulk but eminent in beauty, died, very old, in 1825. Her father had permitted her to share the classical education of her brother; and the result was seen in the mature richness of her mind, and the remarkable beauty of her style. Charles James Fox declared her Essay on the Inconsistency of Human Expectations to be the finest Essay in our language: and her plea for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts was like a trumpet call to the whole host of English dissenters. Her private life was full of honour and of charm.—Then there was Jane Taylor who wrote the delightful “Contributions of Q. Q.” which are to be found in thousands of homes:—and Mrs. Radcliffe, the mother of modern English romance,—and Sophia Lee, one of the writers of the Canterbury Tales,—and Mrs. Piozzi, once Mrs. Thrale, the hostess and friend of Dr. Johnson, and the recorder of much that we know of him:—all these passed away within this period.—And also the busy, complacent, useful Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who put us upon improving our principles and methods of education, and was full of mechanical

JANE TAYLOR.

MRS. RADCLIFFE.

SOPHIA LEE.
MRS. PIOZZI.

EDGEWORTH.

projects which set other people thinking and inventing and maturing:—and 1820—26.
 the pompous Dr. Parr, who believed himself a second Johnson, when Johnson was more thought of than he is now;—Parr, of whom Porson said that “he would have been a great man but for three things,—his trade, his wife, and his politics.” His trade was school-keeping, for which he was unfit; his wife was (as she took no pains to conceal) anything but amiable; and his politics were ultra-liberal;—a great offence to the Ministry when he dined with the Queen, and said grace at Alderman Wood’s table. He had acted with a firmness and moderation which gained him respect at the time of the Birmingham riots in 1791, when his house and library were threatened with the same fate as those of his friend, Dr. Priestly: and his reputation stood high on account, not only of his scholarship, but of some Sermons and Tracts which he had published: so that, though his fame at the time can now be hardly understood, he was in truth by no means beneath the notice of those who were bound to watch the proceedings of the Queen, and who were scandalized at her choice of her domestic chaplain.—The virtuous Lindley Murray died in 1826, at an advanced age. While learning our grammar of him, in our young days, and growing tired of his name, as associated with dull lessons, we little knew to how good a man that name belonged. Lindley Murray was an American; and he came over to England in middle life, and remained with us solely for the sake of the mildness of our climate, which was rendered necessary to him by the loss of health. Under a condition of muscular weakness which prevented his walking for the rest of his days, he contentedly gave up the usual objects and amusements of life, and humbly devoted himself to be as useful as he could from his invalid chair. His school-books spread by tens of thousands over both his native and his adopted country; and the proceeds might have made him very rich. But he thought he had enough already for his simple tastes and moderate desires: and he gave away to those who were in need the entire profits of his works. Thus, much as we have learned from his books, we may learn something better from his life.—A great public benefactor, who died in 1821, was Mr. James Perry, of the “Morning Chronicle,” who gave a new and elevated character and influence to the newspaper press. He was a scholar and a gentleman; and his attainments and character could not have wrought in a more important direction than in that which he chose. The press is now called the fourth power in the State: and just when the need of this power arose the right man came to regulate, refine, and elevate it.

Of those whose divine office it is to refine and elevate the whole mass of society,—the Poets,—we lost some of great name within a few years.

The good and accomplished Bishop Heber,—more known and valued perhaps by the beauty of his Hymns than by any other of his many qualifications,—was suddenly snatched away in the midst of his usefulness in India. He was found dead in his bath,—it was believed from apoplexy,—in April, 1826. His religious fervour gave a freshness of expression to his devotional poetry which, if it does not stand in the stead of originality of thought, supplies us with what is always revered by all minds,—originality of feeling. The Hymns of Bishop Heber have therefore made their way among Christians of all denominations, and caused him to be ranked among the poets of his time. His age was only forty-three.—In the last century, the poems of

1820—26. Robert Bloomfield, the farmer's boy, were brought into notice by Mr. Capel Lofft,—a man of letters, and something of a poet himself. The protector and protected died within a year of each other—the poet in August, 1823; the man of letters in May, 1824.—And Hayley, the friend of Cowper, and author of some poems which had a good deal of popularity in their day, was gone.—A deeper cause for mourning, however, than any we have mentioned,—perhaps the deepest of the period,—was in the untimely loss of three great poets,—Byron, Shelley, and Keats. At the time, the mourning for Byron was infinitely the widest and loudest: but it is not so now, and it can never be so again. His extraordinary popularity during his life, and for some time afterwards, and even now among survivors of his own generation, was justified by the fact of its existence. Such a popularity never arises,—much less endures,—without some reason: but the reason was of a temporary nature; and the fame must be temporary accordingly. Byron's power, which was great, employed itself in uttering, from his own consciousness, the discontents of his time. He was unaware of this, and always believed himself an isolated being, doomed to live and die without sympathy: whereas, he was the mouth-piece of the needs and troubles of men in a transition state of society. When men found their troubles told, and their discontents avowed, in verse of a high order, by a man of high rank, youthful, proud, and egotistical, they rushed into a frantic sympathy with him, and received from him as true, noble, and beautiful, much that will not stand a comparison with nature, morality, and the everlasting principles of taste. Lord Byron could not produce, except by snatches, what was permanently true, because the eye of his soul was perplexed and dimmed by troubles which prevented his seeing things as they are:—he could not produce what was inherently noble, because he was almost wholly engrossed by suffering moods of his own mind:—he could not produce what must be lastingly beautiful, because he strove after affectations. As a greater than himself said of his irony and affectations, "It is a paltry originality which makes solemn things gay, and gay things solemn: yet it will fascinate thousands, by the very diabolical outrage of their sympathies." So said Keats, in pain and disgust at the levity of a passage of Byron, though no man could relish humour more keenly. Thousands were fascinated, and from the cause assigned. Unless it were Scott's, Byron's was the greatest literary fame of our own times. It was kept up by the interest universally taken,—and pointedly invited by the poet himself,—in his private misfortunes. His life was cursed by misfortune from his birth: and his earlier griefs so injured him as to make him himself the creator of his later ones. His life was not pure, nor his heart affectionate, nor his temper disciplined. There was good enough in him by starts, and by virtue of his genius, to suggest what he might have been, if reared under good influences. He wandered about the world during the latter years of his short life; and finally repaired to Greece, to give what aid he could against the Turks. There he died of fever, under a steady refusal to accept of timely medical aid, on the 19th of April, 1824. —In Keats, the world lost a poet of infinite promise. He was little more than a youth when he died: but he had made so vigorous and rapid a growth in power and wisdom, and was learning so to wield his magnificent faculties, that those who have studied his life and writings are dazzled at the mere con-

ROBERT BLOOM-
FIELD.
HAYLEY.

BYRON.

KEATS

1820—26.

ception of what he might have become. The world did not recognise his quality while he lived (indeed there was scarcely time for them to do so):—and some few ignorantly denied, and scoffed at its pretension: but year by year his name is oftener mentioned, and more and more minds are kindled at the scattered flames of his young genius which would, if death had spared him, have shone like a lofty beacon above the ordinary level of human intellect. Men are often least conscious of their greatest losses: and in this, generations are like individuals. Keats died at Rome in February 1821, in the 25th year of his age: and when the news arrived in England, few heard, and fewer still regarded it. After the lapse of a quarter of a century, his fame is rising. He was soon,—in a year and a half,—followed by his friend Shelley, who was drowned at the age of 29, off the coast of Italy. Shelley was a man of a noble and exquisite nature. He “was the most truthful of men,” and of the most godlike benevolence. “His aspect had a certain seraphical character,” we are told; and in that, it was a fair manifestation of himself. He was idolatrously beloved by those who knew him face to face: but his age and he were not on the best terms. There might be fault on both sides;—some defect of prudence and patience on his; and, of course, a great want of enlightenment on the other: of course, because the greatest poets, as indeed the loftiest men of every order, have to educate their followers up to the power of appreciation of themselves. Thus Shelley was persecuted for his opinions;—tortured in his domestic affections by Lord Eldon, who, with all his law, had no knowledge of the rights of opinion; and society not only looked on quietly, but a multitude applauded. So it was in his own day; and moreover, every act of his life,—a life of singular purity and disinterestedness, when some crudenesses of youth were gone by,—was criticised and mocked by little minds which could hardly open to receive the least of his thoughts. Yet, unpopular as he was, and young when he died, he did more than any other man to direct and vivify the poetical aspiration of our time. Shelley still lives to us, not only in his own writings, as yet but partially diffused, but in the whole body and spirit of our recent poetry, and existing poetical life.

SHELLEY.

We have presented and summed up the gains and losses of a seven years' period. We have now to enter upon another, shorter, but not less alive with incident and the spirit of progress.

CLOSE OF THE PERIOD.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

1826.

November.

THE period on which we are now entering,—the last years of the reign of George IV.—is one of remarkable interest and importance in the retrospect, though the complaint of the time was of stagnation of public business. It is true that, for three sessions, scarcely anything was done of what is commonly called public business. In regard to variety of subject, the records of parliament perhaps were never before so meagre, for three consecutive sessions. At the same time, the registers of the period are full of ministerial correspondence, ministerial explanations, and ministerial difficulties. For this there was ample reason; and in this lay the deep importance and interest of the period.

It is common for society to complain of loss of public time, and postponement of public business, when a change of ministry, or other event, induces explanation of their personal conduct on the part of public men. It is common to complain of such explanations, as if statesmen were obtruding their personal concerns about a public which do not care for them, but wants to be about its own business. But this is, wherever held, a vulgar error, and a most pernicious one. Every true statesman knows that his personal honour is a national interest; and every enlightened citizen knows that the highest distinction of a nation is the rectitude of its rulers; and that no devotion of time, thought, patience, and energy, can be too great for the object of upholding the standard of political honour among statesmen. In the most ordinary times, therefore, the enlightened citizen will eagerly receive, and earnestly weigh, the statements of public men with regard to their official conduct, aware that the postponement of legislative acts is a less evil than that of failing to discharge every conscience, to decide upon every reputation, as it comes into question; and thus to ascertain that the moral ground is firm and secure, before proceeding to political action. If it be thus in ordinary times, much stronger was the obligation to prove the conduct and reputation of statesmen at the period we are now entering upon. If, during the next three years, ministerial difficulties and explanations seem to be endless, there must be some cause;—the embarrassment must be, in fact, a characteristic of the time.

We have witnessed the admission into the Cabinet of two men who were called “political adventurers:” and we have recognised in this event the sign that a new time had arrived, requiring for its administration a new order

of men. Though the new men had acted and succeeded in their function the struggles and perplexities of the transition from one state of society and government to another had yet to be gone through: and the beginning of these struggles and perplexities is what we have now to contemplate. We shall see ministry after ministry formed and dissolved. We shall see that the difficulty lay, not in finding competent men,—for able men abounded at that time,—but in determining what great principle, of those afloat, should so preponderate as to determine the government of the country. In the trial of this all-important point, the next three years cannot now be said to have been wasted; though at the time the vexation was severe, of seeing great questions standing still, ordinary legislative business thrust aside, and a temper and language of political bitterness rising up, such as could never have been anticipated among men of rational capacities and gentlemanly education.

The King opened the new parliament in person on the 21st of November, declaring in his Speech that he called the Houses together for the special purpose of declaring and accounting for the measures taken by government in opening the ports to some kinds of grain and pulse, in consequence of the scarcity produced by the drought of the summer. In answer to various complaints in both Houses about the scanty revelations of the Speech, Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning pleaded the special nature of the business which occasioned the present sitting, and promised the regular supply of information and suggestion at the regular time,—after the Christmas recess. Ministers obtained the indemnity they sought for opening the ports during the recess; and, with one exception, little else was done before Christmas. But that exception was a brilliant and most significant one. Mr. Canning accounted to Parliament, and obtained its enthusiastic sanction, for sending troops to Portugal.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.
Annual Register,
1826, p. 175.

Ante. p. 302. &c.

The sanction of Parliament was indeed most enthusiastic; and so was the response from the country. But it is believed by those who ought to know, that this speech was fatal to Mr. Canning. His earnestness and eloquence were taken by the Tories as a demonstration in favour of liberalism. They well knew that he was in fact, though not in name, the leader of the government. They knew that the Duke of York so clearly considered him so that he had just made an audacious attempt, by addressing the King, to get him dismissed from the Cabinet. They gave all their strength to bear him down, and wrought against him with a new exasperation, from the date of his announcement of his having despatched the troops to Portugal. They could not bear him down in intention and in act. They could not bear him down in the estimation of the country, in which he was indeed rising from day to day. But there was a way in which he was in their power: they enfeebled his health. They could not bow his noble head, or tame his princely eye, by reproach or threat; but they could and did,—without design or consideration,—by the poison of disease. There are few men whose nerves are not more or less in the power of other men's judgments and tempers; and of those few, Canning was certainly not one. His magnificent organization, adequate to the production of everything that can ennoble the human being,—absolutely teeming with genius,—had the one imperfection of being too sensitive. This was so clear,—so evident on the merest glance at his face,—that those have

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much to answer for who failed in the consideration thus bespoken by nature herself. Canning needed no indulgence. In the depth of illness, his high courage would have spurned it. He never deprecated;—never, we may be sure, in the innermost breathings of his soul. He provoked much, dared everything, and endured till nature broke down. But nature was breaking down all the time that his enemies were most merciless; and they never saw it. It was visible in the weakening brow, the deepening eye, the quivering lip, the heavy and uncertain step. His enemies did not mark these signs which grieved his friends: and when, in reply to their rancour, the eye flashed again as it was wont, and the cheek flushed, and the voice rang from the roof, they were sure that they had done him no harm. From the time of his speech on sending aid to Portugal, the contest between Canning and his policy, and his foes and their policy, became deadly. It was indeed death that now interposed, and finally settled the conflict.

DEATH OF THE
DUKE OF YORK.

The Duke of York was the first who was withdrawn. The Lord Chancellor saw much of him for some weeks before his death: and the Chancellor's opinion was, that his thoughts were almost exclusively occupied by the Catholic question, and the dread, in regard to that question, of the ascendancy of Mr. Canning. In Lord Eldon's own opinion, his existence was essential to the effectual counteraction of Mr. Canning's influence, and to his displacement from the councils of the King. "His death," declares Lord Eldon, "must affect every man's political situation,—perhaps nobody's more than my own. It may shorten, it may prolong, my stay in office." Of course, Mr. Canning himself must have known as well as other people the importance of the life that had gone,—the significance of the death that had arrived. It must have been with a singular mixture of feelings that a man of his patriotism and power of will, and of his magnanimity and sensibility, must have bent over the vault in St. George's Chapel, into whose darkness, amidst the blaze of torches, the body of his arch-enemy was descending. It was then and there that he took his own death,—perhaps at the moment when he was thinking how quiet is that resting-place at the goal of every human career, where the small and great lie down together, and "princes and counsellors of the earth,"—like his foe and himself,—are quiet, and sleep after their warfare.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 500.

FUNERAL.

If those who attended that funeral could have seen their own position between the past and the future as we see it now, it would have so absorbed all their thoughts as that the body might have been lowered into its vault unseen, and the funeral anthems have been unheard. A more singular assemblage than the doomed group about the mouth of that vault has seldom been seen. In virtue of our survivorship, we can observe them now, each one with his fate hovering over his uncovered head. He who was next to be lowered into that vault was not there. He was in his palace, weak in health and spirits,—relieved and yet perplexed that the course of government was simplified by the removal of his remonstrant brother, whose plea of nearness to the throne,—now so solemnly set aside,—had made his interference at once irksome and difficult to disregard. There would be no more interference now;—no more painful audiences,—no more letters brought in with that familiar superscription. The way was clear now;—but to what? Liverpool and Canning must settle that. If they felt that the Catholic question must be settled, they

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must show how it was to be done; and they must do it. Liverpool and Canning! By that day twelvemonths, how was it with them? Lord Liverpool was not at Windsor that night. He laid down his careworn head to rest, unaware that but a few more days of life—(as he considered life)—remained to him. The body breathed for some months; but in a few days after this, the mind was dead. As for Canning—his heart and mind were full as his noble brow shone in the torchlight. He well knew that it was not only his chief personal enemy who was here laid low, but the only insurmountable barrier to his policy! He saw an open course before him, or one which he himself could clear. He saw the foul fiend Revolution descend into that vault, to be sealed down in it with that coffin. He saw beyond that torchlit chapel a sunny vision of Ireland tranquillized; and the hope rose within him that he might achieve a peace at home,—the sound peace of freedom,—as blessed as the peace which he had spread over the world abroad. And all the time, the chill and the damps of that chapel, dim amidst the yellow glare, with the night fog of January, were poisoning his vitals, and shortening his allowance of life to a mere span. Beside him stood his friend and comrade, Huskisson. They were born in the same spring; they were neither of them to know another moment of health after this chilly night-service; and their deaths were to be not far apart. What remained for both was the bitter last drops of the cup of life;—sickness, toil, perplexity, some humiliation, and infinite anguish. Here, if they had known their future, they would have laid down all self-regards, all ambition, all hope and mirth, all thoughts of finished work and a serene old age, and have gone forth to do and suffer the last stage of their service, before dropping into their untimely rest. These two had made no professions of grief about the death of the prince: they did not vaunt their feelings; yet here they were, sad and solemn; while beside them stood one whose woes about the loss of his royal friend, and about the irreparable loss to the empire, were paraded before all men's eyes, and dinned into the ears of all who would listen. Here stood Lord Chancellor Eldon, beside the open grave in which he declared that the hopes of his country were being buried. Was he lost in grief?—his ready tears in fuller flow than ever?—his soul absorbed in patriotic meditation? “Lord Eldon, recollecting”—what?—that he might catch cold—stood upon his hat, to avoid chill from the flags: “and his precaution was completely successful.” If it had but occurred to Canning to stand upon his hat!—but he was thinking of other things. There were others for whom death was in waiting; and some for whom great labours and deeds were preparing in life. The troublesome opponent of Ministers, Mr. Tierney, who was to be found dead in his study before the next royal funeral; and Lord Graves, who was to die by his own hand, under the provocation of royal vice or levity. And what tasks lay before those who were yet to live and work! Among the six dukes who bore the pall was he who was to succeed to the highest military office now thus vacated: and Wellington himself no doubt thought this night that he was of one mind in the great political questions of the day with the prince whose pall he bore. No doubt he believed that he should, in his proper place, do what he could to exclude the Catholics, and to keep the conscience of the sovereign fixed upon the Coronation Oath, and his duty to Protestantism:—in

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 383.

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his proper place, we say, because the duke spurned the idea of a military chief like himself taking civil office, and openly declared, with indignation at an unfounded rumour, that he should be mad if he dreamed of the Premiership. Yet, before this royal vault should again be opened, Wellington was to be Premier, and use his office to repeal the disabilities of the Catholics. Truly, pledges and prophecies are dangerous things for statesmen to meddle with in times of transition: and it would seem to be a main feature in the mission of the honest and resolute Wellington,—honest and resolute beyond all cavil,—to prove the presumption of pledges and prophecies in times of transition. Then there was Peel, with the same work before him, and much more, of which he had not yet begun to dream; and with the fate before him of losing his best-beloved honour—the representation of his University—and gaining several others,—any one of which would suffice to make an immortality. And there was Hardinge, the friend of both the deceased and the incoming Commander-in-Chief, who was to signalize his age in the history of India by his administration and achievements both of peace and war. And there was, as Chief Mourner, he who was to be the next king, and in whose reign was to occur that vital renovation of our representative system which will be to thoughtful students of a thousand years hence what Magna Charta is to us. What a group was here collected, within the curtain of the future, seeing nothing but the vault at their feet, and the banners of the past waving above their heads; and, wherever they thought they saw some way into the coming time, seeing wrongly,—mistaking their own fancy-painting on that curtain for discernment of what was behind it. And behind that veil, agents work unheard;—death at his grave digging,—and the people with their demands and their acclamations,—and the trumpet voice of conviction summoning prejudice to the surrender. But what they saw not, we, as survivors, see; and what they heard not, we hear; for now that curtain of futurity is hung up over our heads as banners of the past; and the summons of death, and of the popular will, and of individual conscience, are still audible to us,—not in their first stunning crash, but as funereal echoes to which those banners float.

DUKE OF YORK.

The Duke of York went to his grave sincerely mourned by many, and partially honoured by many more who could not honestly grieve that he did not reach the throne. In his youth, he had shown valour and an earnest aspiration to good generalship in the campaigns in Flanders. During the thirty-two years that he held the office of Commander-in-Chief, he did eminent service to the state in his administration of the army,—instituting and carrying through such reforms and new discipline as made his management in fact a recreation of that national force. His nature was frank and honourable, if only he had done justice to it. It endeared him to his friends, even to the point of inducing them to overlook, and almost to justify, his vices. The loyal cant of the day was that in his vices “there was nothing un-English,—nothing unprincely:” but the princes and people of England could not be expected to admit among their characteristics recklessness in sensual vice and pecuniary extravagance. His dissoluteness was,—if not “unprincely,”—vulgar, as all selfish passion is: and his recklessness about debt was, we may surely say, eminently “un-English.” We cannot give up probity in money transactions

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as an English characteristic. As for his high toryism,—when all danger from it was passed, men remembered that he was ill-educated, and, by his position, precluded from the enlightenment which was flowing in upon men in humbler stations. It was the subject of grave apprehension, very reasonably, while he lived, with his foot upon the steps of the throne, and his eye upon the crown: but as soon as he was let down into the grave, it was remembered with a sort of respectful compassion as a delusion troublesome to himself, and a weakness which would in a former age, have been regarded as a grace of royalty. His statue stands conspicuous on its pillar within sight of the Horse Guards, where so much of his business lay. It might be that some debtors, ruined by his cruel extravagance, might sigh in their prison when they heard of its erection; and some whose domestic honour and peace had been tainted by his passions, might wonder at the strange distribution of homage in a state which professes the purity of Christianity: but it was pretty generally admitted that he had done his country better service than princes often do, and that to his labours were partly owing the successes of our wars, and the high character of our military forces. His death took place on the 5th of January, 1827, and his funeral on the 20th.

The Duke of Wellington succeeded, as has been said, to his office of Commander-in-Chief; and his sailor-brother, the Duke of Clarence, to his prospect of the throne. On the 15th of February, a message from the King was presented to both Houses of Parliament, recommending an addition to the income of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence, in view of the increased expenses which would be occasioned to them by the Duke's proximity to the throne. A good deal of objection was made to this in the Commons, but none in the Lords. The great distress of the people, whose condition had just been made the subject of a royal letter to the bishops, and the inconvenience of the precedent, were the grounds of opposition; and these were met by the plea that the maintenance of royal dignity was an object which must not give way to temporary pressure; and that the sum proposed was only a portion of what would be saved to the country by the death of the Duke of York. Up to this time, the income of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence had been £26,500. By the death of the elder brother, an addition of £3,000 a year would now accrue: and it was proposed that Parliament should grant £9,000 more,—viz. £3,000 to the Duke, and £6,000 to the Duchess; by which their joint income would be raised to £38,500. After much opposition and debating it was thus settled.

It was on Thursday, the 15th February, that this royal message was presented; and it was taken into consideration the next evening,—Friday. Lord Liverpool brought forward the subject in the Upper House, and spoke upon it. He was never seen to be better or more cheerful. The next morning, Saturday, his servant was surprised at not hearing the bell, as usual, after breakfast, and went into his master's study, where he found Lord Liverpool lying on the floor in an apoplectic fit. Whether he would live was for some time doubtful; but it was quite certain that his political career was ended. His colleagues wrote in their private letters, "Heaven knows who will succeed him." Some felt it "a tremendous blow, under present circumstances." The principal of these circumstances was the universal expectation,—a state of doubtful expectation,—about the proposed Corn Bill, and some legislation about the Catholics. The

Hansard, xvi. 475.

GRANT TO THE
DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Hansard, xv. 517.

ILLNESS OF LORD
LIVERPOOL.

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Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 583.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 584.

King was at Brighton; and Mr. Peel went down to inform him of the event. Mr. Canning was at Brighton, confined to his bed by the illness caught at the funeral; and Mr. Huskisson was confined to the House in London from the same cause. Mr. Canning had charge of the Corn Bill, and he was awaiting with extreme anxiety the approaching discussion of the Catholic question. At such a moment as this, the Premier was struck down; and the two friends could neither meet nor wait upon the King. We have the Lord Chancellor's first impressions on the occasion. "If other things made it certain that he would otherwise succeed him, I should *suppose* Canning's health would not let him undertake the labour of the situation. But," he adds, in his usual temper towards Canning, "ambition will attempt anything." Two days after, the Chancellor became very oracular, as was natural, when it was certain that there was nothing to be known. "This, at any time," he says, "would be an event of importance; so immediately after the Duke of York's death, and upon the eve of the days when the great questions of the Corn Trade and Catholic Emancipation are to be discussed and decided, it is of importance so great, that nobody can be certain whether it is not of so much importance as to render almost certain wrong decisions upon these vital questions." If we can make out any meaning here, it is that Lord Eldon now supposed a liberal policy sure to prevail, and believed that Lord Liverpool had been the only security against the dreaded "changes in our institutions." The letter proceeds, "Nobody knows, and nobody can conjecture with probability, how soon the illness of the Minister will, as it seemingly must, dissolve the administration, or how another is to be formed and composed. Speculation as to this is very busy, and politicians are all at work. The Opposition are in high spirits, and confidently expecting to enjoy the loaves and fishes. They may—but they also may not—be disappointed."

LORD LIVERPOOL
AND MR. CANNING.

The first thing decided upon was to wait awhile, for the chance of Lord Liverpool recovering sufficiently to send in his resignation. Week after week, as it passed away, showed this to be less and less probable; and by the end of March it was found necessary to set about appointing his successor. Setting aside their political relations, the loss of Lord Liverpool was very affecting to Mr. Canning. Through life, the two had been close personal friends, from the time of their first meeting at college. They were born in the same year; they were inseparable at Christ Church, where they laughed at one another's whims,—Jenkinson's brown coat, with buttons bearing the initials of the great orators, and Canning's gloriously nonsensical verses,—and where, in the intervals of their mirth, they discussed the gravest subjects of human interest, with the earnestness belonging to the genius of the one, and the integrity of the other. They entered parliament at the same time, under Mr. Pitt, and were never separated in their private regards by the differences on public matters which occasionally arose. This is highly honourable to them both. It must be a strong friendship which could enable the man of the world to bear with the views of the man of genius, when those views were too large for his comprehension; and which would enable the man of genius to bear with the negative qualities of the *mediocre* man of the world, in times which demanded all the energies of every statesman. In political life, each was largely indebted to the other; as is more apparent to us now than perhaps it ever was to them. Lord

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Liverpool was not, apparently, fully aware that it was Canning who had of late years made his government illustrious in the eyes of the world: but every one now knows that it was so. And Canning could hardly estimate at the time, the influence of Lord Liverpool's presence in securing him a field for the exercise of his statesmanship. If he had entered the cabinet, he could hardly have remained there, during the last four years, under any other Premier of the same politics as Lord Liverpool. It was no time for weighing these considerations, when the news of his friend's seizure came to him as he lay fevered in his bed. He had but just returned from visiting Lord Liverpool at Bath, where he had gone, after the Duke's funeral, to improve his health. He had come back worse than he went: and in the depth of his illness, this news reached him. The effects of grief, anxiety, and sickness, were visible enough when he appeared in the House to bring forward the measures he had in charge, and to encounter the onslaught of persecution which was never mitigated by any touch of reverence, sympathy, or even common humanity, till it had laid him low.

The country was not the worse for the loss of Lord Liverpool, though his official life had been useful in its way, at certain periods of his career. He was a good balance-wheel when the movements of parties might otherwise be going too fast. He had no striking ability, either in action, or in speech. He was diligent, upright, exceedingly heavy, and as his friends well knew, extremely anxious under his sense of responsibility. He could not throw off his cares for a day or an hour,—either in the free air of Wimbledon, or in his trips to Bath; and it ended in his cares throwing off his life. He declared in private, that on no one day for twenty-five years of official life had he seen his heap of letters on the table without a sharp pang of apprehension, and a sense of reluctance to break the seals,—so strong did he feel the probability to be every day that something was going wrong in some part of the world. It appears strange that a man of his cast,—merely respectable in abilities and characteristics, should have held office so long—(the premiership for fifteen years)—in times of such stir and convulsion: but the fact was, his highest ability was that of choosing and conciliating able men, and keeping them together in sufficient harmony to get through their work, if nothing more. Nobody quarrelled with him: and he set his whole weight against his colleagues quarrelling with each other; so that the Eldons and the Cannings, the Bexleys and the Huskissons met in council, week after week, for years together, inwardly despising and disliking each other, but outwardly on decent terms, and all working in their own way in their own offices. This could not go on for ever; and, as we have seen, Lord Liverpool himself knew it could not go on much longer. He meant to retire presently; to leave the way open for some settlement of the Catholic question. Thus, the nation did not sustain much loss by the brief shortening of his term: nor was there the affectation of mourning a great political loss. There was decorous regret that such a penalty on toil and conscientiousness should have overtaken so meritorious a public servant; and then ensued extreme eagerness to know what influence would next be in the ascendant. This could not be ascertained till the following April.

LORD LIVERPOOL
AS MINISTER.

In the mean time, the Corn Bill must first be brought forward. It was com-
mitted to Mr. Canning's care, as leader in the Commons. He was extremely

THE CORN BILL.

1827.

Memoir of Hus-
kisson, *Speeches*,
p. 129.

Hansard, xvi. 772.

Hansard, xvii.
392.

Hansard, xvii.
1097.

Hansard, xvii.
1258.
CATHOLIC QUES-
TION.

Hansard, xvi.
1009.

anxious about it, as it was the elaborate work of his two friends, Lord Liverpool and Mr. Huskisson; and the subject was not one that he felt at home in. His diffidence was aggravated by the misfortune that he and Mr. Huskisson were kept apart by illness,—in London and Brighton, and were thus precluded from personal conference about the Bill. The only thing that could be done was to send a confidential friend backwards and forwards, till each Minister was in possession of the mind of the other. If the conclusion of the matter could have been foreseen, or the causes of that ending have been made known as they ought to have been, the trouble and anxiety might have been, in great part, spared. The Duke of Wellington made an end of the measure, by heading the Opposition in the House of Lords, and carrying an amendment which vitiated the Bill too seriously to allow it to be proceeded with:—the very Bill which had been prepared by the Premier, and fully sanctioned by the Cabinet, of which the Duke was, at the time, a member. It was not till the 1st of March that Mr. Canning was well enough to bring forward the measure; which he did in the form of a set of Resolutions, intended to be the foundation of a new Corn Law. According to the Resolutions, foreign corn might always be imported, free of duty, to be warehoused; and it might always be let in for home consumption, on payment of certain duties;—for instance, the duty on wheat was to be 1s. when wheat was at 70s., and to increase 2s. with every decrease of 1s. in price: and so on, in different proportions, with other kinds of grain. The Resolutions were well received and supported,—the House rejecting, by a majority of three to one, on an average, the amendments proposed on behalf of the landed interest. A Bill,—the new Corn Law, as it was supposed to be,—was brought in on the 2nd of April and passed on the 12th,—before the House adjourned for the Easter holidays. When Parliament reassembled, Mr. Canning was Premier, and the conduct of the Bill in the Upper House devolved upon Lord Goderich;—Mr. Robinson under his new title. Under some extraordinary misconception, the Duke of Wellington declared that he believed the amendment he had to propose would be acceptable to the government: whereas it went to establish the principle of prohibition, which it was the main object of the measure to cast aside. His amendment proposed that “foreign corn in bond should not be taken out of bond until the average price of corn should have reached 66s.” The government was left in a minority of eleven in the vote on this clause on the 12th of June; and the Bill was therefore abandoned.

The debate on the Catholic Question came on on the 5th of March, and continued two days. The anti-Catholic speakers, who mustered strong in this new Parliament, wandered away from the consideration of the motion before the House into the whole set of old topics,—back to the Treaty of Limerick, and wide among the doings of the priests at the late elections: and Mr. Canning had to bring them back to the question of the night, which was “that this House is deeply impressed with the expediency of taking into consideration the Laws imposing Civil Disabilities on his Majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects.” Mr. Canning’s speech was deeply impressive to the House; but it would have been more so, and have been received as an oracle by the Catholics, if it could have been known that these were his last words on the subject which he had at heart during the whole of his career. The

danger of neglect, of letting things alone at such a crisis as had arrived, was his last topic on this last occasion. After stating that "one bugbear was fairly disposed of,"—the Coronation Oath,—he said, "What are the other dangers which exist at this eleventh hour, I have yet to learn; but a singular fate has attended this question. The question is—'Will you do as we propose? or will you do nothing? or what will you do?' And secondly, 'What dangers do you apprehend?' Now, to the question, 'Will you do as we propose? or will you do nothing? or will you do something else?' the answer is clear enough: 'We will not do as you propose.' But to the two remaining branches of the question, no answer is given. And when we ask, 'What dangers do you apprehend from the passing of a bill similar to that of 1813?' we are also unable to get any answer. . . . I conjure the House to reflect that the motion is merely a declaration on the part of the House, that the state of Ireland and of the Roman Catholic population, is such as to demand the consideration of the House. To this proposition it is intended to oppose a direct negative, importing that the House does not think the state of Ireland, or the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, deserve consideration. That is the issue upon which the House is now going to divide. The resolution goes no farther than that the House should adopt the opinion of its predecessors, who sent three bills up to the House of Lords, of relief to the Roman Catholics. . . . On the other hand, if this resolution should be negatived,—if the House of Commons should decide that the consideration of the state of Ireland is not worthy to be entered upon,—then is the House of Commons changed indeed; and it would be more easy to imagine than it would be safe for me to express, the consequence that may ensue from such a change."

It is now just five years since Mr. Canning uttered in the House what he supposed would be his last appeal on behalf of the Catholics;—in 1822, previous to his intended departure for India. He was then mistaken; and now, when really uttering his last appeal, he was unconscious that it would be so. Never could he have been more earnest than now: for any retrogression of the Commons on this subject would be, at the moment, a most untoward circumstance for the cause and for himself. It was the moment when a new administration was about to be formed,—when its determining principle (whether avowed or not) was to be concession or opposition to the Catholic claims,—and when the King himself was falling back, on the removal of the rivalry of the Duke of York. The loss of the Commons from the cause must be most disastrous at such a crisis. This loss, however, had to be sustained. The division took place a little before five in the morning of the 7th of March, in a House of 548 members; and there was a majority of four against the motion. The anti-Catholic party *had* gained by the elections. The Marquess of Lansdowne had given notice in the Lords of a motion grounded on the petitions sent up by the Catholics: but on this decision of the Commons, he withdrew it, fairly avowing that he dared not go forward, nor brave the consequences of the disappointment to the Catholics, if both Houses should display a majority against them. This was an anxious season for the friends of the Catholics, to whom it appeared that the question had gone back, and who scarcely dared to reckon on the patience of their wronged fellow-subjects.

1827.

Hansard. xvi.
1003.Hansard. xvi.
1083.

1827.

But men rarely know what circumstances are really prosperous or adverse. This was but the step back before the spring. It was too late now for the Catholics to be disheartened, when they had just seen what they could do in the field of the elections. They roused themselves for the struggle which was to prove the final one.

NEW ADMINISTRATION.

First, this question broke up another Cabinet. Of the existing Cabinet, the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel were the strong men on the one side, and Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson on the other. Lord Liverpool had kept them together hitherto,—he having been openly of the anti-Catholic party all his life, but being well known among his colleagues to have arrived at the conviction, and to be about to act upon it,—that the friends of the Catholics must soon carry their point. The repressive and combining influence of Lord Liverpool being now removed, the diverse elements of the government parted off, and rose up against each other; so that it became immediately necessary to decide which should have the ascendancy. It was not yet considered indispensable that there should be an undivided Cabinet on this question. The question might be left open; but whether the Premier should be of the one way of thinking or the other was the particular which could not but bring this all-important matter to an issue.

Mr. Canning could not be dispensed with. The public showed that it thought so;—the King certainly thought so;—and the members of the administration and their friends betrayed in their correspondence, and by their methods of consultation that, if they themselves did not think so, they feared that everybody else did. Mr. Canning also held the second place in the Cabinet, and had the first right to look to the premiership, and to be consulted upon it. He it was, therefore, whom the King summoned on the 27th of March, when it was found to be in vain to wait for any amendment in the state of Lord Liverpool, and when the restlessness of the country and of political parties showed that there must be no more delay in forming an administration. The interview was long, and embarrassing to both. The King requested Mr. Canning's opinion on the practicability of placing at the head of the Cabinet a statesman who held Lord Liverpool's avowed opinions on the Catholic question. Mr. Canning declared that it might, he believed, be done, and a wholly anti-Catholic government be formed; in which case, of course, he must retire; and he plainly intimated that he could not remain in the government except as Prime Minister. This could have been no surprise to the King; for there was no statesman of Mr. Canning's way of thinking to whom he could, with any propriety, have been made subordinate. Yet the King could not bring himself at once to the point of nominating Mr. Canning; and this first negotiation was at an end.

What might have been the next step, if the King had been let alone, there is no saying: but some anti-Catholic members of the aristocracy, alarmed at the strength of the popular expectation in favour of Mr. Canning, took a step of greater boldness than the sovereign was disposed to endure, and ruined their own cause by an attempt at intimidation which roused the royal resentment. A Tory peer, a duke and privy-councillor, requested an audience of the King, and told his Majesty that he came as the express representative of eight peers,—all, like himself, holding great electoral influence,—to declare

Life of Canning,
p. 359.

Life of Canning,
p. 360.

that if Mr. Canning was placed at the head of the Cabinet, they would all withdraw their support from the government. This took place on the fourth day after the abortive interview. The effect of this disrespectful and corrupt proceeding was to determine the King on the instant to send for Mr. Canning.

1827.

MR. CANNING
CONSULTED.

By this time, Mr. Canning was aware that if he became Premier, the government must lose the services of Mr. Peel; for Mr. Peel had told him so on the 29th of March. Between these two statesmen there was, with all their differences of opinion, and much clashing of interests at this crisis, no ill will. Private letters of Mr. Canning's are in existence which declare that Mr. Peel was the only seceding member of the government who behaved well to him at this time: and it is known that he declared Mr. Peel to be his rightful political heir and successor.

MR. PEEL.

Mr. Peel's difficulty in this instance was a peculiar one. It arose from his being responsible in his office for the administration of the affairs of Ireland. He was disposed for a Cabinet divided on this question, as the House of Commons had just shown itself so very equally divided; and on almost every other question of importance, he was of the same mind with those of his colleagues who sat with him in the Commons. But he felt that he could not fill his place in the House as Irish Minister with any satisfaction under a Premier who advocated a policy in regard to the Catholics opposite to his own. Such were his reasons, assigned by himself in a frank and admirable letter to Lord Eldon, of the date of the 9th of April. He made no difficulty that could be helped, and caused no embarrassment. He spoke to no one but the King and Mr. Canning on the subject: and his intentions and feelings became known only by the King's mention of them to the Chancellor. It is a curious circumstance that while Mr. Canning was telling the King that he believed an anti-Catholic Cabinet could be formed, and offering, in that case, to retire, Mr. Peel was telling his Majesty that he "could not advise the attempt to form an exclusive Protestant government;" and that he could not be a party even to the attempt, if it should be contemplated. He was confident that the King was of the same opinion. And so it appears by the result. This letter of Mr. Peel's was written on the 9th of April, and it was on the 10th that the King sent for Mr. Canning;—not now, as before, merely in his character of privy-councillor, to consult and advise, but to receive the charge of forming an administration. The *animus* with which this result was anticipated by his anti-Catholic colleagues is shown in various of Lord Eldon's letters. "I think—who could have thought it?—that Mr. Canning will have his own way. I *guess* that I, Wellington, Peel, Bathurst, Westmoreland, &c., will be out." Some occasional notices in the old Chancellor's letters of the temper of the times unveil to us something of what the "political adventurer" had to go through, on taking possession of the highest political seat in the empire, and make but too natural his rapid descent to the grave. "The whole conversation in this town," writes Lord Eldon from London, "is made up of abusive, bitterly abusive talk, of people about each other,—all fire and flame. I have known nothing like it."—"I think political enmity runs higher and waxes warmer, than I ever knew it." Thus it was in private, before and during the Easter recess: and after that recess, no one needed any other information than the reports of the debates, to learn how far the spirit of persecution, and the

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 590.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 588.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 588.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 604.

1827.

language of personality, could go among noblemen and gentlemen who were charged with the gravest of all trusts, but could neither discern the greatness of the man whose heart they were breaking, nor the needs of the time which he was summoned to rule. Doubtless it was the needs of the time, the political transition, that they quarrelled with, though they themselves believed, as did their victim, that it was the man : but if this goes to palliate their conduct in any degree, it did not to him lessen the smart of the wounds they inflicted in every possible mode, and at every possible opportunity.

We have seen that Mr. Canning received the King's commands on the 10th of April. He immediately applied to all his late colleagues, inviting them to remain in their offices. Of the replies that he received, the most extraordinary appears to be that of the Duke of Wellington, who requested to know, before signifying his intentions, who was to be at the head of the government. Mr. Canning's answer of course was, that it is usually understood that the individual charged with the construction of a government is to be at the head of it ; and then the Duke resigned. "It was on the 11th of April," to adopt Mr. Canning's own statement of the affair, "that he received the resignation of Lord Westmoreland. Of the resignation of Mr. Peel he was aware some days before. He received the resignation of the Duke of Wellington on the 12th, at half-past ten, A.M. Lord Bexley sent in his shortly after. With these, and the verbal resignation of Mr. Peel, he went to St. James's. Those of Lord Eldon and Lord Bathurst arrived during his absence, and did not reach him till he was in the King's closet, having been sent after him, according to his directions, in case of their arrival. He would state further, that so far were they from anticipating the resignation of Lord Eldon, that the King and himself were both under the delusion that there were the best reasons to expect the support of his services in the new arrangements. . . . It was bare justice to Lord Eldon to say that his conduct was that of a man of the highest feelings of honour, and that throughout it had been above all exception." Mr. Canning presented this handful of resignations to the King, saying, "Here, Sire, is that which disables me from executing the orders I have received from you, respecting the formation of a new administration. It is now open to your Majesty to adopt a new course ; for no step has yet been taken in the execution of those orders that is irrecoverable ; but it becomes my duty fairly to state to your Majesty, that if I am to go on in the position where you have been pleased to place me, my writ must be moved for to-day ;" (it was the last day before the Easter recess, and orders for the moving of the writ had been given ;) "for if we wait till the holidays, without adopting any definite steps, I see that it is quite hopeless for me to attempt to persevere in the objects I have undertaken." The King, in reply, gave him his hand to kiss, and confirmed him in his appointment ; declaring, however, according to some accounts, that he himself was resolved to oppose any further concessions to the Catholics. In two hours after this interview in the royal closet the House of Commons was ringing with acclamations,—Mr. Wynn moving, "That a new writ be issued for the borough of Newport, in consequence of the Right Hon. George Canning having accepted the office of First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury."

The Minister had now the Easter recess before him for constructing his

RESIGNATION OF
SEVEN CABINET
MINISTERS.

Hansard, xvii.
522.

Hansard, xvii.
434.

Annual Register,
1827, p. 102.

Hansard, xvii.
39).
MR. CANNING
PREMIER.

1827.

Cabinet: but there were more resignations to come in. The Duke of Wellington gave up his office in the Ordnance, as well as that of Commander-in-Chief. Lord Melville, though agreeing with Mr. Canning on the Catholic question, declined holding office with some whom he believed Mr. Canning about to solicit. The Master of the Mint, Mr. Wallace, the Attorney-General, Sir Charles Wetherell, and the Judge Advocate, Sir J. Beckett, next resigned; and even four of the King's household officers. There must have been among these personages an expectation of a new time—of a transition to what they called Radicalism or revolution, under a Minister of liberal politics; for it is difficult to see how some of them could be affected by Mr. Canning's becoming the head of a Cabinet in which the Catholic question was still to remain open, the King's resolution to oppose further concession being understood.

It was this which made Mr. Canning's task a very difficult one, it being impossible for him to fill up the vacant offices with men of his own opinions on the great question of the day. The task was achieved, however, by the 27th of April. On that day every office in the government was declared to be filled up. Lord Bexley returned to office; the Heir Presumptive became Lord High Admiral the day after Lord Melville's resignation of his office at the head of the Admiralty; Sir John Copley, created Lord Lyndhurst, became Chancellor; Lord Anglesey went to the Ordnance, Lord Dudley to the Foreign, and Mr. Sturges Bourne to the Home-office. Mr. Robinson, who had remained, was removed to the Upper House, with the title of Lord Goderich, in order to lead the business there. Mr. Canning himself assumed the Chancellorship of the Exchequer (uniting it with that of First Lord of the Treasury), in order that Mr. Huskisson and he might work with the fuller effect together in matters of finance. Thus the Minister was prepared with a complete government to meet the House of Commons on its assembling on the 1st of May, to the surprise of not a few of both friends and foes, who had believed it impossible that he could surmount such a mass of impediments as had been thrown in the way of his entrance into the highest office of the state. The curiosity was now intense to see how he would proceed.

NEW CABINET.

The times were so busy and exciting that men had hardly leisure to note, as they would have done at any former period, the retirement of the aged Chancellor. Perhaps there was in their minds—perhaps there was in his own—a doubt whether he had retired, never to return,—he who had talked of it so often and so long, and had yet adhered to office for a longer time than any other Chancellor, lay or clerical, from the Norman conquest downwards. His tenure of office had been but once interrupted, and had extended over within a few weeks of a quarter of a century. He felt sensibly the calmness with which his resignation was received by the political world, and the country at large, though he was ready to be at least invited back to office under future Ministers. He has left on record one really painful fact in connection with his retirement,—a fact so painful as to enable us partly to account for his low estimate of persons beyond his own set of acquaintances. He writes, on the eve of his retirement, "If I had all the livings in the kingdom vacant when I communicated my resignation (for what *since* that falls vacant I have nothing to do with), and they were cut each into threescore livings, I could not do what is asked of me by letters received every five minutes, full of eulogies

RETIREMENT OF LORD ELDON.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 605.

Life of Lord Eldon, ii. 594.

1827.

upon my virtues, all which will depart when my resignation actually takes place, and all concluding with, ‘Pray give me a living before you go out.’” He delivered up the seals on the 30th of April, the day before the re-assembling of Parliament. His usual self-gratulation did not fail him on this great occasion of his life. By the heartiness with which Lord Eldon is always found rejoicing in his own conscientiousness, as in a special gift of Providence, it seems as if he could not suppose that other men could ordinarily desire and endeavour to do their duty. He writes, “I have now taken my farewell of office. . . . I bless God that he has enabled me to look back to a period of nearly half a century, spent in professional and judicial situations and stations, with a conviction that the remembrance of the past will gild the future years which his providence may allow to me, not merely with content, but with that satisfaction and comfort, and with much happiness, of which the world cannot deprive me.” This is characteristic; and the old Chancellor might be partly right in his special self-gratulation. We hope that most public men are at least as conscientious as he; but there are probably few who are so confident and exulting in their own righteousness. The enjoyment of his special prerogative seems, however, to have been far from sufficient for his peace. It was necessary to him that others should value him as highly as he valued himself; and it is not long before we find him sore and irritated at that diminution of his political importance, which was the natural and inevitable consequence of his retirement into private life.

Life of Lord
Eldon, ii. 596.

CHAPTER II.

THE session lasted two months after the re-assembling of Parliament on the 1st of May. It was a season of turbulence and rancour, which it is painful and humbling to look back upon. The only consolation is in the reflection that the disorder, though it took the appearance of hatred between individual men, was in fact a feature of the state of political transition. The Minister was the professed object of the rancour, and it was he who sank under it: but not even he, with all his powers, and all his attributes of offence, could have caused such perturbation at another time, and in another position. The real conflict was between old and new principles of policy, and the wounds which men received were as representatives of those principles. In as far as Mr. Canning could keep this truth before him, he was able to bear what was inflicted; but he could not always keep it in full view. Perhaps no man, of any temperament, could have done so; and it was not to be expected of one so sensitive as he. Yet he might have got through if he had had any fair chance of health: but he had been ill ever since the funeral in that cold January night, which had been nearly fatal to many besides himself. Now, feeble and exhausted, he was to experience no mercy. Those who had differed from his former politics, and those who detested his present aims; all who had suffered under his sarcastic wit; all who were disappointed that he had overcome his late difficulties; all who were jealous of a "political adventurer" having risen over the heads of the aristocracies both of birth and of political administration, stimulated one another to insult, and overpower, if they could, the Minister who stood exposed to all attacks—incapable of aid, because himself so immeasurably greater than all who would have aided—as than all who attacked him. During the remainder of the session he was a lion at bay. The lion may turn a flashing eye upon his hunters, and shake the woods with his roar; but a sufficiency of wounds must prostrate him at last; and so it was here. Here was the flashing eye, the indomitable valour, and the thundering utterance, under which the assailants quailed for the moment. But the powers of life gave way; and, in a little while, only the silent ghost remained in the old haunts to call up the awe and remorse which were now too late. It is universally agreed that personality and insult were never before so rank in any assembly of English gentlemen as now, during the two months following Mr. Canning's accession to the Premiership.

The most tangible complaint of his adversaries was about "coalition;" and this fact is warrant enough for the supposition that the discontent was with the time, though the complainers themselves believed it was with the man. The Minister was supported by the Whigs; and the reason why was, that he and they agreed upon most subjects of importance. About Reform of Parli-

ament they differed; but, as Canning's arch foe, Lord Grey declared, there

1827.

ENMITY TO MR.
CANNING.

THE WHIGS
SUPPORT THE
GOVERNMENT.

1827.

was no near prospect of carrying this question; and it was, in his opinion, no reason for separating men who could unite to carry points of more pressing urgency. They differed about the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts; and this was nearly all. They were agreed upon the leading question of the times,—the Catholic Disabilities; and on all matters of foreign and commercial policy and finance, by which Mr. Canning was most eminently distinguished. The attendants at Pitt dinners, the Tories who professed to worship the statesman who desired Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, were not exactly qualified to cry out upon the union between Mr. Canning and the Whigs, whose differences might be called almost nominal, in comparison with those which should have divided the Tories from Mr. Pitt. The fact was, that names, and recollections, and insignia, connected the Tories with Mr. Pitt, while political principles separated them; and political principles united the Whigs and Mr. Canning, while names, recollections, and insignia, severed them. Some were wise enough to see that principles are of more importance than badges and names; and we should be lenient towards those who are less enlightened, remembering how, in ordinary times, these names and badges serve as safeguards of political honour and consistency, and that it is not every one who can see the moment when they cease to be true, and ought therefore to be discarded. All the wisest people,—and Mr. Canning assuredly for one,—would have been thus lenient, if the offended persons had kept within the bounds of temper and courtesy. For the prevailing rancour, however, there could be no excuse.

The enmity appeared not only in connection with the explanations which necessarily took place on all sides after the re-assembling of Parliament. No one subject of the few brought forward during these two months could be debated, or even touched upon, without occasion being taken to cavil at the new administration, and especially its head. But of all the shafts which were aimed at him, it is believed that none struck so deep as one,—or rather a quiverful,—from the hands of Lord Grey. In a speech of apparent calmness, of deep melancholy, of affecting unconsciousness of the destiny awaiting himself and his victim, and of the most intense personal animosity against Mr. Canning, Lord Grey opened his views in the House of Lords on the 10th of May. He believed his own political life to be closed; and he declared in pathetic terms his sense of loneliness in this latter stage of his life. He did not blame his brother Whigs for their coalition with Mr. Canning, if their personal feelings did not forbid it: but his did. He avowed his want of confidence in the Minister; and gave his reasons for it. A more striking and mournful instance can hardly be found than this speech of the effect of prejudice, in blinding one great man to the merits, even to the most familiar attributes,—of another. Lord Grey had soon occasion to show how well he could bear misconstruction and rancour: but if anything could have shaken his firmness in his own hour of the ordeal, it must have been the remembrance of this fatal attack on Canning,—so insolent, hard, and cold, so insulting, and so cruel! As might be expected from the state of mind which produced it, the speech was full of misconstructions and mistakes. As far as its matter was concerned, nothing could have been easier than to answer it; but the question was how? The practice of answering in one House the personal

SPEECH OF LORD
GREY.

Hansard, xvii.
720—733.

attacks made in another is radically objectionable; and Mr. Canning had the greatest reluctance to have recourse to this apparently only method; and besides, he was not in a state of health which would have borne him through such an exertion. He believed that ere long he should be able to reply to Lord Grey in person: but they never met more. Lord Grey's political friends, now the allies of the Minister, did full justice to Mr. Canning's character in the Upper House; but this particular speech was never efficiently answered; and the thought of it rankled in the breast of the victim to the last.

1827.

Life of Canning,
p. 366.

When the Commons proceeded to business, there was something almost as perplexing as strange in the aspect of the House;—Mr. Brougham and Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Tierney and Sir Robert Wilson, sitting on the ministerial benches: and some who had till now scarcely known any other seat, finding themselves on the opposite side. The one point in which all parties appeared to agree was in wishing the session over. In the present state of men's minds no great question could be discussed with due calmness; and the ministerial members especially wished that their relations with the Cabinet should become more assured and consolidated before they exposed the greatest questions of the time to the passionate treatment of the legislature. Thus, not only were notices of motions on Parliamentary Reform, and repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (Mr. Canning's great points of difference with his new allies) withdrawn, but also two on the Catholic Question, which was too serious a matter now to be committed to the forces of such a tempest as at present perturbed the world of politics.

BUSINESS WITH-
DRAWN.

A motion tending to take bankruptcy matters from under the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery, was negatived by a large majority.—Mr. Hume failed in his endeavour to get repealed that one of the Six Acts of 1819, which imposed a stamp on cheap periodical publications.—On the ground of petitions from some of the ports, a committee was asked for to inquire into the state of the shipping interest: and this called up Mr. Huskisson to justify his policy by such clear proofs of the increased employment of British shipping, both absolutely and in relation to foreign shipping, that the mover, General Gascoyne, Mr. Huskisson's colleague in the representation of Liverpool, abstained from pressing for a division.—Two Bills, attacking some of the worst evils of the Game Laws, those incessant rebukes to our pride of progress and civilization, reached the third reading, and then were thrown out;—Lord Wharnccliffe's by a majority of one, the Marquis of Salisbury's by a majority of sixteen. Lord Suffield, however, obtained the legal prohibition of man-traps and spring-guns, and other such barbarous defences of game at the expense of men.—Mr. Peel obtained some important improvements in the Criminal Law. Five acts were passed under his management, by which a great simplification of the law was effected, much old rubbish got rid of, and a way prepared for further reforms.—Some corrupt boroughs were doomed to disfranchisement; but the session closed before the necessary steps were taken.—The new Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to move for a finance committee in the next session; and there was therefore little discussion of the budget of the present, which was brought forward on the 1st of June. The view which he presented of the affairs of the country was dark enough. The people were hardly yet beginning to recover from the depression of 1826. All were so far satisfied that it was better

BUSINESS
ATTEMPTED.Hansard, xvii.
1063.Hansard, xvii.
665.

SPRING GUNS.

Hansard, xvii.
290.Hansard, xvii.
934.
CRIMINAL LAW.THE BUDGET.
Hansard, xvii.
1098.

1827.

Hansard, xvii.
1312.

THE CORN BILL.

Hansard, xvii.
1338.CLOSE OF THE
SESSION.Hansard, xvii.
411.MR. CANNING'S
HEALTH.

to leave the country to itself than to attempt at present any financial innovations, that Mr. Canning's resolutions with regard to supply met with no opposition; and all financial discussion was deferred till the committee of next session should be moved for.—Mr. Canning moved and carried an amendment on a motion of Mr. Western's respecting the Corn Laws; the amendment being grounded on the Bill which had passed the House in the spring, and been thrown out by the mistake of the Duke of Wellington. The last words of the last speech of Mr. Canning in parliament related to the conduct of the Duke of Wellington in this matter, and pledged the government to bring forward another Corn Bill in the next session, of the same bearing as that which had been lost. Great offence was given in the Upper House by his declaration that he believed the Duke to have been, while meaning no harm, "made the instrument of others for their own particular views." At the moment, some few voices cried "Order;" "but they were instantly lost in loud and continued shouts of 'Hear, hear.'" This speech was the last of the oratory which has become a tradition, and will continue to be so for an age to come. Except to answer a trifling question, on the 29th of June, Mr. Canning never spoke again in parliament.

We have seen how meagre were the legislative results of this session. All were glad when it closed. Mr. Canning's enemies felt powerless in the face of his administration, the strongest, it was believed, since the days of Pitt: while his adherents desired repose from parliamentary conflict in order to consolidate their combination, while their leader sorely needed it for the strengthening of his exhausted frame. On the 2nd of July, the session was closed by commission, with a speech which noticed little but the gradual revival of manufacturing employment, and the royal hope that the Corn Laws would be a subject of attention in the next session.

The time was now come for repose to many who greatly needed it after the excitement of a most stormy session, during which, if there was little done, there was more felt and said than some had strength of body and mind to bear. Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson were both very ill. Mr. Huskisson was ordered abroad by his physicians. Mr. Canning could not, of course, leave his post: and those who watched him with the almost idolatrous affection which he inspired in all who were near to him, saw that no outward repose could be sufficient for his needs. Time was the only healer that could avail him; for his oppression was of the mind. He keenly felt the loneliness of his position,—estranged from those who had always been his comrades, and whom he loved with all the capacity of his large heart; obliged to bear with their misconception, more painful to him than the insults of their followers; and prevented by former passages of his life, and by many ghosts of departed sarcasms of his own, from throwing himself into intimacy with his new coadjutors. He had a bitter sense of loneliness on the pinnacle of his power; and bitter was it to bear alone the remembrance of the usage he had met with during the last few weeks. Time and success would set all right. Of success he was certain; for he was not one who failed in his enterprises. Whether time would aid him depended on whether his bodily forces would hold out. Those who looked at his care-worn face and enfeebled frame trembled and doubted: but here were some months before him of the finest season of the year: and it would be seen

what they could do for him. A week after the dispersion of parliament, he dined with Lord Lyndhurst at Wimbledon, and sat down under a tree while warm with walking: and upon this followed a feverish cold and rheumatism. On the 18th, Mr. Huskisson called to take leave before his continental journey, and found him in bed. He looked so ill, that his friend observed that he seemed the most in need of change and relaxation: to which Mr. Canning replied, "O! it is only the reflexion of the yellow linings of the curtains." Mr. Huskisson went abroad the next day, to be brought back by the news of his friend's death.—Two days after this last interview, Mr. Canning removed to the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, where Fox died, and inhabited the very room. He did not gain strength, though he attended to business, and on the 25th dined with Lord Clanricarde. He complained of weakness, and went home early. On the 30th he waited upon the King, who was so alarmed at his appearance, that he sent his own physician to him. Some friends dined with him the next day. He retired early, and never left his bed again. His illness,—internal inflammation,—was torturing, dreadful to witness; but there was yet much strength left; for he lived till the 8th of August. On the 5th, the Sunday before his death, he desired his daughter to read prayers, according to his custom when he could not attend church. His agony ceased some time before his death, when mortification had set in. It was a little before four in the morning of Wednesday, the 8th of August, when he breathed his last.

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ILLNESS.

Memoir of
Huskisson, p. 137.Life of Canning,
p. 368.

DEATH.

For some few days before, the nation had been on the watch in fearful apprehension of the news; but yet the consternation was as great as if this man had been supposed immortal. Multitudes felt that the life most important to the world of the whole existing generation had passed away. It was a life in which men had put their trust,—(more trust than should perhaps be put in any life,)—from the Isles of Greece to the ridges of the Andes. When those who had by their persecution sapped that life now awoke to a sense of its importance, they must have been amazed at themselves that they could have indulged spleen and passion in such a case, and have gratified their own prejudices and tempers at so fatal a cost. But thus it is when men serve instead of mastering their prejudices and passions;—they know not what they do: and if they discover what they have done, it is because it is too late. All the honour that could be given now was given. All the political coteries, the whole country, the whole continent, the whole world echoed, with eulogy of the departed statesman. From the most superficial and narrow-minded of his critics, who could comprehend nothing beyond the charm which invested the man, to the worthiest of his appreciators who were sensible of the grandeur of his intellect and the nobility of his soul, all now joined in grief and in praise: and none with a more painful wringing of the heart than those who had but lately learned his greatness, and the promise that it bore. Of his near friends, one sat unmoved and insensible in the midst of the universal lamentation,—Lord Liverpool, whose mind had died first, but whose frame remained after the grave had closed over his comrade and successor; and another, Mr. Huskisson, received among the Styrian Alps a report of Canning's convalescence, three days after he was actually dead. The mournful news soon followed; and in a few days, Mr. Huskisson was on his way homewards, heart-stricken

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for the loss of his friend, and convinced, as he repeatedly and earnestly said, that his own political career was over.

FUNERAL.

Mr. Canning was fifty-six years of age. He was borne to his grave in the Abbey on the 16th of August. His family wished his funeral to be as private as the funeral of such a man could be; and they declined the attendance of several public bodies, and a multitude of individuals: but yet, the streets were so thronged (in a deluge of rain) that a way was made with difficulty; and the Abbey was filled: and the grief of the mourners next the coffin hardly exceeded that which was evident in the vast crowd outside. The next morning, the King bestowed a peerage on Mr. Canning's widow. Statues of the departed statesman, and monuments, exist in many places in the world: and it is well: but the niche in history where the world holds the mind of the man enshrined for ever, is his only worthy monument.

Annual Register,
1827, Chron. 143.

HONOURS

It would be a curious speculation,—but it is one not in our way at present,—what Mr. Canning would finally have been and have done, if the great European war had lasted to the end of his life. His glory in our eyes is mainly that he was the Minister of the Peace: his immortality lies in his foreign policy, by which Peace was preserved and freedom established, in a manner and to an extent which the potentate of the world of mind is alone competent to achieve. Czars, emperors, kings, and popes, may make peace one with another, in a mechanical and therefore precarious manner; and this is all that, as the princes of the earth, they can do. The princes of the wider and higher realm of mind can do what Canning did,—spread Peace over continents, and the great globe itself, vitally and therefore permanently, by diffusing and establishing the principles of peace. Of a History of the Peace, he must be the hero. In a state of war, he must have been something great and beneficent; for his greatness was inherent, and his soul was—like the souls of all the greatest of men—benign: and his power,—the prerogative of genius,—was paramount as often as he was moved to put it forth. Without being able to divine what he would have done in a state of continuous war,—without daring to say that he would have calmed the tempest in its wrath as effectually as he forbade it to rise again,—we may be assured that he would have chosen to do great things, and have done what he chose.

One of the strongest evidences of Mr. Canning's power is the different light in which he appeared to the men about him and to us. His accomplishments were so brilliant, his graces so exquisite, his wit so dazzling, that all observers were completely occupied by these, so as to be almost insensible to the qualities of mind which are most impressive to us who never saw his face. To us he is, as Lord Holland called him, "the first logician in Europe." To us he is the thoughtful, calm, earnest, quiet statesman, sending forth from his office the most simple and business-like despatches, as free from pomp and noise as if they were a message from some pure intelligence. We believe and know all that can be told of his sensibility, his mirth, and the passion of his nature: and we see no reason for doubting it, as, in genius of a high order,—in Fox, for instance,—the logic and the sensibility are so intimately united, that in proportion as the emotions kindle and glow, the reason distils a purer and a yet purer truth. But to us, to whom the fire is out, there remains the essence; and by that we judge him. We hear of his enthusiasms, kindling

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easily at all times, but especially on the apprehension of great ideas : but what we see is that no favourite ideas led him away from a steady regard to the realities of his time. We hear of his unquenchable fancy ; but we see that it never beguiled him from taking a statesmanlike view of the society spread out below him, and waiting upon his administration of the powers of the government. He was one of the most practical of statesmen : and herein lay one of the most indisputable evidences of his genius. His genius, however, never was questioned. There might be, and there were, men who disparaged genius itself in its application to politics : but there were none who doubted Canning's having it,—whatever it might be worth.

His faults were, not only unworthy of his genius, as all faults are, but of a nature which it is not easy to reconcile with genius of so high an order as his. Some of them, at least, were so. We may be able to allow for the confidence, and the spirit of enterprise—of adventure,—which helped to obtain for him the name of “adventurer ;”—the spirit which sprang into the political amphitheatre, ready for the combat on all hands, and thinking at first more of the combat than the cause : we can allow for this, because time showed how, when he knew life and its seriousness better, the cause of any principle became everything to him, and the combat, a thing not to be sought, however joyfully it may be met. The name of “adventurer” can never be given to him who resigned office rather than take part against the Queen, and gave up his darling hope of representing his University in order to befriend the Catholic cause. He was truly adventurous in these acts, but with the self-denial of the true hero.

We may allow, again, for the spirit of contempt, which was another of his attributes, least worthy of his genius. It was but partial ; for no man was more capable of reverence : and much of his ridicule regarded fashions and follies, and affectations of virtue and vice : but still, there was too much of it. It did visit persons ; and it did wound honest or innocent feeling, as well as exasperate some whose weakness was a plea for generous treatment. For this fault, however, he paid a high penalty,—he underwent an ample retribution. Again, we may allow for some of his political acts,—such as countenancing restrictions on the press,—from the consideration of the temper and character of the times, and of his political comrades : but they necessarily detract from our estimate of his statesmanship.

The same may be said about Parliamentary Reform. It is exactly those who most highly honour the advocates of Reform of Parliament who can most easily see into the difficulties, and understand the opposition, of the anti-reformers in parliament. But there is no knowing what to say about Mr. Canning's opposition to the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. He knew the facts of the case, of course :—his advocacy of the Catholic claims shows that he knew the principle of it. His inconsistency in this case must be regarded as one of the waywardnesses,—one of the faults, at once intellectual and moral (for he alleged no reasons,—no plea which he himself would call reasonable)—which are the links that bind down even the greatest to their condition of human frailty.—As for all the rest of him,—he was worthy of his endowments and his great function in life. He was an excellent son to his humble mother, who died, happily for herself, before him,—in March of the same year. He was nearly as

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large an object in the mental vision of all the leading men of his time as in that of his proud mother, or of his adoring family and private friends. His mind and his name did indeed occupy a great space in the world, from the year 1822 till his death : and when he was gone, there was a general sensation of forlornness throughout the nation which made the thoughtful ponder how such dismay could be caused by the withdrawal of one from amidst its multitude of men.

CHAPTER III.

THE Catholics were now eager to learn their fate: and the nation—indeed many nations—had the strongest interest in knowing whether Mr. Canning's principles were still to reign by the administration of his friends, or whether the old Tories were to return to power. It was soon known that there was still to be a mixed Cabinet, under the premiership of Lord Goderich.

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LORD GODERICH,
PREMIER.

MR. HUSKISSON.

Mr. Huskisson, feeble in health, and cast down by the loss of his life-long friend, wished to leave office. He had turned homewards on hearing the bad news, and remained a few days at Paris, partly to await the arrival of the despatches which were travelling after him, and partly for needful rest. If the Tories should come into power, or if a successor of his own views could be found, he intended to winter in the south of Europe. When his letters arrived, however, he found that he had no choice. The new Premier earnestly pressed him to take the Colonial office; and the King had emphatically expressed his desire that Mr. Huskisson would return to enter upon his function as soon as possible. Thus, then, it was clear that Mr. Canning's policy was to be in the main pursued, and this was not the less believed for the Duke of Wellington's returning to the command of the army; for he made an open declaration that he did so for the sake of the public service, and by no means from any sympathy with the proceedings of the Cabinet, of whose mixed character he disapproved as much as he had done five months before. He desired to be considered as standing aloof from the policy of the Cabinet. Of course, people asked why he could not have held his command in the same way during Mr. Canning's administration: to which he replied by an intimation that there were personal reasons for his secession at that time. The great difficulty was what to do about the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer,—filled by the departed Premier. It was declined by two members of the administration, and by Mr. Tierney; and at last it was given,—unfortunately as it turned out,—to Mr. Herries, who had been Secretary of the Treasury under Lord Liverpool. If there were before too many conflicting elements in the government to be securely controlled by any hand less masterly than Mr. Canning's, matters were pretty sure to go wrong now, after the admission of a functionary so little powerful in himself, and so little congenial with his colleagues, as Mr. Herries. The Whigs were very near going out at once; but they were persuaded to stay and make a trial. Lord Harrowby yielded his place to the Duke of Portland, Mr. Canning's brother-in-law, who had been Lord Privy Seal; and Lord Carlisle, an excellent moderator and pacificator, succeeded to the Duke of Portland.

DUKE OF
WELLINGTON.

MR. HERRIES

Memoir of
Huskisson, p. 112.

This was the third administration which had existed within seven months, and it had no great promise of stability. The recess, however, was before it,—the greatest advantage to a new Cabinet: and the nation supposed that by

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LORD DUDLEY.

Annual Register,
1833, Chron. 210.AFFAIRS OF
GREECE.

DECEMBER, 1826.

Annual Register,
1827, p. 391.
APRIL, 1827.

the end of the year it would be seen what it was worth; whether it could hold together, and what it proposed to do. By the end of the year the case was indeed plain enough,—that it was about the weakest administration on record. Difficulties occurred in several departments: but the most confounding were in that of Foreign policy. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Dudley (raised to an earldom in September of this year), was a man of great ability, and much earnestness in his work; and he was fully possessed with Mr. Canning's views. At a former period, he had suffered under a nervous depression which too clearly indicated the probability of that insanity which ultimately prostrated him: but at this time, he appeared to be capable of business, and to be eccentric in manner only, and not in ways of thinking. Some inconveniences occurred from his singularities, which made it rather a relief when he retired, in May, of the next year; but they did not occasion any serious difficulties. He was in the habit of thinking aloud; and, amusing as this might be in Cabinet council, it was dangerous anywhere else: and it is believed that in the autumn we have now arrived at, he directed to the Russian ambassador a letter intended for the French:—to Prince Lieven a letter intended for Prince Polignac. Prince Lieven took this for a *ruse*, and boasted of his penetration in being aware of the trick.—It was the state of a portion of our foreign affairs which might have made this accident a most disastrous one. The truth is, the difficulty was great enough, without any aggravation from carelessness and unfortunate accidents.

The aspect of the Greek cause was much altered by the part the ruler of Egypt had been for some time taking in the war. Mohammed Alee, the Pasha of Egypt, a tributary and vassal of the Porte, had brought all his energy, and all his resources, to the aid of his sovereign. Before he did this, the war dragged on, as it might have done for ever, if the parties had been left to their rivalry of weakness. But when the Pasha sent his son Ibraheem with ships, troops, money, and valour, to fight against the Greeks, everything was changed. By the end of 1826, the whole of western Greece was recovered by the Turks; and the Greek government had transferred itself to the islands. Men who find it at all times difficult to agree are sure to fall out under the provocations of adversity: and the dissensions of the Greek leaders ran higher now than ever. Each was sure that the disasters of the country were owing to some one else. It was this quarrelling which prevented the Greeks from taking advantage of some successes of their brave general Karaïskaki, to attempt the relief of Athens,—closely pressed by the Turks. The Turkish force was soon to be strengthened by troops already on their march; and now, before their arrival, was the time to attempt to relieve Athens. Some aid was sent; and some fighting went on,—on the whole with advantage to the Greeks; but nothing decisive was done till Lord Cochrane arrived among them, rated them soundly for their quarrels, and took the command of their vessels;—the Greek admiral, Miaulis, being the first and the most willing to put himself under the command of the British officer. In a little while, Count Capo d'Istria, an official esteemed by the Russian government, was appointed President of Greece for seven years.—The Turkish reinforcements had arrived, absolutely unopposed, before Athens; and this rendered necessary the strongest effort that could be made for the deliverance of the place. General Church

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brought up forces by land, and Lord Cochrane by sea; and by the 1st of May, the flower of the Greek troops, to the number of ten thousand, were assembled before the walls of Athens.—It was soon too clear to the British commanders that nothing was to be done with forces so undisciplined and in every way unreliable. The troops of Karaïskaki lost their leader, and incurred disaster by fighting without orders; and then, through a series of mistakes and follies, the issue became hopeless. Between 8 and 10 o'clock in the morning of the 6th all was ruined. The killed and wounded of the Greeks amounted to 2,500: and the rest were dispersed, like chaff before the wind. Of those who escaped, the greater number took refuge in the mountains. Lord Cochrane was compelled to throw himself into the sea, and swim to his ship.—General Church strove hard to maintain his fortified camp at the Phalerus, with 3,000 men whom he had collected: but when he found that some of the Greek officers were selling his provisions to the enemy, he gave up, and retired to Egina,—sorely grieved, but not in despair.—Lord Cochrane kept the sea,—generally with his single frigate, the *Hellas*, contributed to the cause by the United States,—and now and then with a few Greek vessels, when their commanders had nothing better to do than obey orders. He was alone when he took his station off Navarino, to watch the fleet of the Egyptian Ibraheem; and he had better have been alone when he went on to Alexandria, to look after the fleet which the Pasha was preparing there; for, when the Egyptians came out to offer battle, the Greeks made all sail homewards.

MAY, 1827.

The Turks now supposed they had everything in their own hands. On the intervention of the French admiral, De Rigny, they spared the lives of the garrison of the Acropolis, permitting them to march out, without their arms, and go whither they would. Then all seemed to be over. The Greeks held no strong places but Corinth and Napoli, and had no army: while the Turks held all the strong places but Corinth and Napoli, and had two armies at liberty,—that of the Egyptian leader in the West, and of the Turkish Seraskier in the East,—to put down any attempted rising within the bounds of Greece.—But at this moment of extreme humiliation for Greece, aid was preparing; and hope was soon to arise out of despair. While Mr. Canning was fighting his own battles in parliament, he had his eye on what was passing in Greece; and the fall of Athens, and the dispersion of the Greek forces, only strengthened his resolution that the powers of Europe should hasten the interposition he had planned long before.

It was important to Russia that Turkey should be weakened in every possible way; and Russia was therefore on the side of the Greeks. The sympathies of France and England were on the side of the Greeks; but they must also see that Greece should be freed in reality, and that Turkey should not be destroyed; so they were willing to enter into alliance with Russia to part the combatants, preserve both, impose terms upon both, and see that the terms were observed. The Duke of Wellington had gone to St. Petersburg to settle all this: and the Ministers of the three Courts laid before the government of the Porte at Constantinople, the requisitions of the allies. The great object was to separate the Turks and Greeks,—the Faithful and the Infidels,—who could never meet without fighting: and it was proposed,—or, we may rather say, ordained,—by the allies, that all the Turks should leave Greece, receiving

THREE ALLIED
POWERS.Annuaire His-
torique, Appen.
p. 102-3.

1827.

compensation (in some way to be devised) for the property they must forsake. The Greeks were to pay a tribute to the Porte, and to be nominally its subjects: and the Turkish government was to have some sort of veto on the appointment of officials: but substantially the choice of officers, and the enjoyment of their own modes of living, were to be left to the Greeks. As might be expected, the victorious Turk was amazed at this interference between himself and his rebellious subjects: and if he would not listen to dictation before the fall of Athens, much less would he afterwards. There was threat as well as dictation; threat of enforcing the prescribed conditions: but the Porte braved the threat as loftily as it rejected the interference.

The rejection was too natural and reasonable not to be received as final: and the three Powers therefore proceeded to their acts of enforcement. It may be remembered that Mr. Canning, ill and wearied, after the close of the session, exerted himself to transact some public business. The chief item of this business was causing to be signed the Treaty with France and Russia, concerning the affairs of Greece, which was finished off in London, and immediately despatched to Constantinople. In this treaty, the alliance and its purposes were justified on the ground of "the necessity of putting an end to the sanguinary contest which, by delivering up the Greek provinces, and the isles of the Archipelago, to the disorders of anarchy, produces daily fresh impediments to the commerce of the European states, and gives occasion to piracies which not only expose the subjects of the contracting powers to considerable losses, but render necessary burdensome measures of suppression and protection." England and France moreover pleaded the appeals they had received from the Greeks. The treaty concluded with a declaration and pledge of disinterestedness;—of desiring nothing which the whole world besides was not at liberty to obtain.

A month from the date of the arrival of the instructions to the ambassadors at Constantinople was the time allowed to the Porte for consideration. If the terms of the three Powers were not by that time acceded to, they must proceed to the threatened enforcement, with every intention to preserve their own pacific relations with Turkey. The work of mediation was to be carried on by force, in such a case, under the plea that such a proceeding would be best for the interests of the contending powers, and necessary for the peace and comfort of the rest of the world. There were squadrons of all the three Powers ready in the Levant: that of Russia being commanded by Admiral Heiden; that of France by Admiral De Rigny: and that of England by Sir Edward Codrington.

The formal note of the ambassadors at Constantinople was delivered in on the 16th of August, with a notification that an answer would be expected in fifteen days. On the 30th of August, no reply having been volunteered, it was asked for, and given only verbally. Again the Porte declined recognising any interference between itself and its rebellious subjects: and when the consequent notice of enforcement was given, the Turkish government became, as any other government would, in like circumstances, bolder in its declaration of persistence in its own rights. Then began a season of activity at Constantinople such as had seldom been witnessed there;—horses and provisions pouring in from the country, and sent off, with ammunition, arms, and stores,

TREATY OF
LONDON.Annals of His-
tory, Appen-
dix, p. 162-163.Annual Register,
1827, p. 310.

THE PORTE.

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to occupy the posts along the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. There was an incessant training of troops, under the eye of the Sultan or his Wezeer; and the capital seemed in the way to be turned into a camp. There is something striking in the only words the Turkish Minister would utter, in the final interview of the 14th of September: "God and my right," said he, in the calmest manner. "Such is the motto of England. What better answer can we give, when you intend to attack us?"

Annual Register,
1827, p. 312.

Meantime, the Egyptian fleet, strongly reinforced, had arrived in the Morea: and the English commander had no right to interpose any obstacle; the time being the end of August, and the answer of the Porte not being yet delivered. Sir Edward Codrington, however, hailed Ibraheem, informed him of what was going on at Constantinople, and offered him a safe conduct, if he wished to return to Egypt. But if he chose to enter the harbour of Navarino, to join the Turkish fleet there, he must clearly understand that any of his vessels attempting to get out would be driven back. Ibraheem chose to enter. There now lay the ninety-two Egyptian vessels, and the Turkish fleet crowded in the harbour; and off its mouth lay the British squadron on the watch. For some time, Ibraheem occupied himself in preparing his troops for action against the Greeks; but on the 19th of September he determined to try an experiment. He sent out a division of the Turkish fleet, to see if the English would let them pass. Sir Edward Codrington warned them back; but the Turkish commander replied that he was under no other orders than those of Ibraheem. The Egyptian prince, being referred to by both parties, and afterwards by the French Admiral, who had come up with his squadron, and the danger of the case amply explained to him, declared that he would recall the Turkish ships, and wait the return of couriers whom he would send to Constantinople and to Alexandria; but that as soon as he received orders to sail, his whole combined fleet would come out, and brave all opposition. A sort of armistice was agreed on, verbally, for twenty days, during a long conference between the Egyptian, French, and English commanders, on the 25th of September. The two latter trusted to Ibraheem's word that his ships would not leave the harbour for the twenty days,—ample facilities having been allowed by them for the victualling of his troops; and they sailed for Zante to obtain fresh provisions for their fleet. As soon as they were gone, only five days after the conference, Ibraheem put out to sea, to sail to Patras. On the 2nd of October, an armed brig brought notice to Sir E. Codrington of this violation of the treaty. The admiral immediately returned with a very small force, met successively two divisions of the Turkish fleet, and turned them back to Navarino. In his wrath, Ibraheem carried war inland, slaughtering and burning, and driving the people to starvation, and even uprooting the trees wherever he went, that no resource might be left to the wretched inhabitants. As the spirit of the treaty of London was thus broken through, the three admirals concluded to compel an adherence to the terms agreed upon at the conference, by entering the harbour, and placing themselves, ship by ship, in guard over the imprisoned fleets. The strictest orders were given that not a musket should be fired, unless firing should begin on the other side. They were permitted to pass the batteries, and take up their position; but a boat was fired upon by the Turks, probably under the impression that she was sent

EGYPTIAN FLEET.

Annual Register
1827, p. 314.

Annual Register,
1827, p. 318
BATTLE OF NA-
VARINO.

1827.

to board one of their vessels. A lieutenant and several of the crew were killed. There was a discharge of musketry in return by an English and a French vessel: and then a cannon shot was received by the French admiral's ship, which was answered by a broadside. The action, probably intended by none of the parties, was now fairly begun: and when it ended, there was nothing left of the Turkish and Egyptian fleets but fragments of wreck strewing the waters. As the crews left their disabled vessels, they set them on fire; and among the dangers of the day to the allied squadrons, not the least was from these floating furnaces drifting about among a crowd of ships. The battle, which took place on the 20th of October, lasted four hours. The Turkish and Egyptian forces suffered cruelly. Of the allies, the English suffered the most; but with them, the loss was only seventy-five killed; and the wounded were under two hundred. The three British line-of-battle ships had to be sent home, after being patched up at Malta for the voyage.

The anxiety of mind of the three admirals is said to have been great,—both on account of the calamity itself, and the doubt about how their conduct of the affair would be viewed at home. One reasonable apprehension was that there would be a slaughter of the Christians at Constantinople. But things were now conducted there in a more cautious and deliberate manner than of old. An embargo was laid on all the vessels in the harbour; but the mob of the Faithful were kept in check. There were curious negotiations between the government and the ambassadors while each party were in possession of the news, and wanted to learn how much the other knew. The Sultan himself wished to declare war at once; but his counsellors desired to gain time; and there were doubts, fluctuations, and bootless negotiations, in which neither party would concede anything, for several weeks. The Turks would yield nothing about Greece; and the allies would yield neither compensation nor apology for the affair of Navarino. On the 8th of December, however, it being clear that nothing could be gained by negotiation, the ambassadors left Constantinople. The Christian merchants might have embarked with them; but they must have left their property behind; and some preferred remaining. The Turkish authorities went to great lengths in encouraging them to do so: but whether this was from pacific inclinations, or from a sense of their value as hostages, could not be certainly known: and the greater number did not relish trusting themselves to conjecture in such a case. The day before the ambassadors left, an offer was made of a general amnesty to the Greeks. But this was not what was required. As they sailed out of the harbour, the Sultan must have felt that he was left, deprived of his fleet, at war with Russia, England, and France. But the coolness and ability shown by his government in circumstances so extremely embarrassing as those of this autumn were evidence that there were minds about him very well able to see that if Russia desired to crush him, England and France would take care that she did not succeed. As for the Greeks, their government was thankful to accept the mediation of the allies; but so weak as to be unable to enforce any of their requisitions. Piracy, under the Greek flag, reached such a pass in the Levant, that Great Britain had to take the matter into her own hands. In the month of November, it was decreed, by an order in council, that the British ships in the Mediterranean should seize every vessel they saw under the Greek flag, or

AMBASSADORS
LEAVE CONSTAN-
TINOPLE.

GREEK PIRATES.

1827.

armed and fitted out at a Greek port, except such as were under the immediate orders of the Greek government. Thus we were carrying matters with a high hand in regard to both parties concerned in the unhappy Greek war. It is a case on which so much is to be said on every side, that it is impossible to help sympathising with all parties in the transactions preceding and following the battle of Navarino:—with the Greeks, for reasons which the heart apprehends more rapidly than tongue or hand can state them; with the Porte, under the provocation of the interference of strangers between her and her rebellious subjects;—with the Egyptians, in their duty of vassalage, (however wrongly it might be performed;)—with the Allied Powers, in their sense of the intolerableness of a warfare so cruel and so hopeless going on amidst the haunts of commerce, and to the disturbance of a world otherwise at peace: and with two of those three allies in their apprehension of Turkey being destroyed, and Greece probably once more enslaved, by the power and arts of the third.

If the case appears to us now, so many years after the event, perplexing, and in every way painful, what must have been the sensation in the Cabinet of Lord Goderich on the arrival of the news of the battle of Navarino! The Cabinet was already torn by dissensions of its own, so serious and unmanageable that the Premier was meditating his resignation. At a moment when the members of the government were feeling that no one of them was sure of his function for a week, and that it was certain that all could not remain in power, came this thunderclap—this stroke of war in the midst of peace. They were the successors of the great peace Minister, whose fame as a pacificator had spread over the world; and here was a fierce belligerent act perpetrated on an ally, amidst declarations of peace, and probably a train of consequences to be met which there was no seeing the end of! Any power but Turkey would go to war with us on the instant. If Turkey did not, it would be only through her weakness; and the first consequence of that weakness would be that Russia would endeavour to devour her; and there again was danger of far more formidable war. While waiting to hear how the news would be received at Constantinople, it was necessary to decide at once on the countenance to be given to the admirals who had been driven to act on their own judgment. The countenance afforded them by their respective governments, in the first instance, was cordial and emphatic; and there can be little doubt that this was right. Theirs was a position of singular difficulty: not only they acted in good concert to the best of their judgment, but no one ventured to say what they could have done better, while all deplored the event. There was a degree of chance-medley about the catastrophe which seemed to exclude the event from the scope of human control: and in cases so out of the common course, the wisest method always is to uphold the reputation, and with it the nerve and confidence, of responsible public officers. So, from the existing government, Sir Edward Codrington received ample justice. The news of the battle arrived in London on the 10th of November; and on the 13th Sir Edward Codrington was gazetted as Knight Commander, and eleven of his officers as Companions of the Bath. From the Emperor of Russia and the King of France the English Admiral received thanks and high honours; and, whatever differences of opinion existed as to the treaty and the policy of the allies

TROUBLES IN THE
CABINET.

1827.

DISSOLUTION OF
THE MINISTRY.

Hansard, xviii.
273—279.

towards Turkey, there was nothing heard in Parliament but praise of the officers whose charge it was to carry that policy into effect.

The difficulties which endangered the existence of the Cabinet at this time were occasioned by a discordance of principle among its members, though they took the form of a personal quarrel. Mr. Herries was unacceptable to the liberal section of the Ministry; and, though he naturally supposed that, having acted with Lord Goderich before, he could act now in a Cabinet of which Lord Goderich was the head, he found that the Premier's connexion with the Whigs had materially changed their relation to each other. The immediate cause of quarrel was about the Finance Committee, promised by Mr. Canning, and looked forward to in the approaching session. It was time to be making arrangements for this committee, and to be agreeing upon a chairman. Lord Goderich left the affair in the hands of the ministers who sat in the Commons, concluding that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would take the lead, or at least be cognizant of whatever was done. But negotiations were entered into with Lord Spencer to secure Lord Althorp for chairman, without a word being said to Mr. Herries; and it was only by accident that he learned what proceedings had been taken in the business of his own office without his knowledge. It did not gratify his feelings to find that everybody, all round, supposed that he knew, or had forgotten to inquire whether he did or not. Either personal offence was intended, or he was too insignificant to have been the object of it; and in either case his position was intolerable. The nomination of Lord Althorp was disapproved by him, and he opposed it, stating his reasons. This was on the 29th of November. Other difficulties, many and serious, had now arisen; and from this time till the 19th of December, the country can hardly be said to have had a government at all. Lord Goderich had formally tendered his resignation. It was clear that either Mr. Huskisson or Mr. Herries must go out; but nothing could be settled for want of a head to the Cabinet; for, of course, Lord Goderich could not act as such among his colleagues after having sent in his resignation. On or about the 20th of December, Lord Goderich was induced to withdraw his resignation; and then Mr. Herries, and immediately after Mr. Huskisson, placed their offices at his disposal. But Mr. Herries was again forgotten or slighted. No one told him of Mr. Huskisson's offer to resign, while the Premier urged him to retain his place. As soon as he heard of Mr. Huskisson's resolution to abide by the nomination of Lord Althorp, and to go out if he could not carry that point, Mr. Herries resigned. Lord Goderich, apparently believing both these gentlemen to be absolutely essential to his government, and being unable to reconcile their differences, gave the matter up, and went to Windsor, on the 8th of January, to explain to the King that he could not go on, and to resign his office.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 11.

These miserable dissensions had been occupying the time and the minds of the Ministers during the precious weeks which should have been employed in preparing for the approaching session of Parliament. Parliament was to have met at this very date; but, in order to afford time for the formation of a ministry, it was further prorogued to the 29th of January. During the interval of actual dissolution, Mr. Huskisson had been desired by the

Annual Register,
1828, p. 22

King to send Lord Harrowby to him. Lord Harrowby went to Windsor, but was firm in declining the Premiership, on the ground of ill-health. There is good reason to believe that Mr. Huskisson might have risen into Canning's seat at this time; but he was warned by his friend's fate, and decided that he had not health for the office.

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Memoir of
Huskisson, p. 115.

There had now been enough of mixed administrations; or the King thought so. Lord Liverpool had kept one in working order by his weight of character, his business faculty, and the power and dignity accruing from his length of service. Mr. Canning would have kept such an administration together by the commanding power of his mind. But it was not to be supposed that anyone else could be found who could bring harmony out of elements of discord; and the condition of public affairs was such as unusually to require a strong and united government. So the King sent for the strongest and most peremptory man of all; and in spite of the Duke of Wellington's declaration not long before, that he should be mad if he ever thought of undertaking an office for which he was so little fit, he found himself, before the middle of January, 1828, Prime Minister of England.

DUKE OF WEL-
LINGTON PRIME
MINISTER.

CHAPTER IV.

1828.

FOR a few days the old Tory party were happy. Ail would be well now. The King would have no more trouble about the Catholics, for they would be put down. Lord Eldon would be the person consulted by the Duke about the formation of a new ministry, and would have great influence in it, even if he should at length, at seventy-seven years of age, think himself too old for office. There would be no more talk of a balance of parties in the cabinet: but the Duke would have his political comrades drilled into uniformity; — “a perfect machine,” as he had declared his Peninsular army to be. So people thought; but the strongest and most peremptory of men must bend like a willow wand before the force of opinion. Opinion was now too strong for even the Duke of Wellington; and no one of these anticipations was fulfilled.

WELLINGTON
ADMINISTRATION.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 30.

The day after the Duke received his Majesty's commands, he wrote to Lord Eldon, declaring his intention of calling on him the next day. By Lord Eldon's account, the meeting was a somewhat awkward one; the ex-Chancellor evidently expecting the offer of some position in the administration, though too old to resume his seat on the woolsack. “From the moment of his quitting me,” writes Lord Eldon, “to the appearance in the papers of all the appointments, I never saw his Grace. I had no communication with him, either personally, by note, letter, by message through any other person, or in any manner whatever,—and, for the whole fortnight, I heard no more of the matter than you did,—some of my colleagues in office (and much obliged to me too) passing my door constantly on their way to Apsley House without calling upon me.—In the meantime rumour was abroad that I had refused *all* office: and this was most industriously circulated, when it was found that there was, as there really does appear to me to have been, very great dissatisfaction among very important persons on my account, as neither included in office, nor at all, not in the least, consulted. . . . However, there was a degree of discontent and anger among persons of consequence, which, I suppose, working together with its having been somehow communicated that I was much hurt at this sort of treatment, brought the Duke of Wellington to me again; and the object of his visit seemed to be to account for all this. He stated, in substance, that he had found it impracticable to make any such administration as he was sure I would be satisfied with; and, therefore, he thought he should only be giving me unnecessary trouble in coming near me—or to that effect.” Then out came the old politician's soreness about not having been offered the office of President of the Council; and about being considered impracticable, which he was sure nobody had any reason to suppose; and about having been neglected for a whole fortnight. The Duke gave as a justification for having concluded that Lord Eldon would not have approved the composition of the ministry, that it

seemed as if he did not like it, now the whole was complete : to which Lord Eldon replied, that he thought it a d——d bad one. “ We conversed together,” he continues, however, “ till, as it seemed to me, we both became a good deal affected.”—They might well find themselves “ a good deal affected.” Perhaps we may feel something of it, in merely reading the record. It is sad to think of these old comrades parting off in the way they were doing now, under a control which neither of them liked, but to which the younger could wisely bend, while the elder could only fret and be angry. Agreeing in dislike of the changes in the times, they differed about how to meet them ; and the elder called the younger inconsistent ; and the younger called the elder impracticable. The wedge was in which was to split up policies, and parties, and friendships. It had been driven in some way now ;—everybody having, by intention or mischance, lent a hand to drive it further for some time past. The Duke was the man to knock out the wedge, and make all whole again : but lo ! he found himself under a compulsion which permitted him no choice but to drive the wedge home, leaving our Protestant Constitution, as Lord Eldon believed, shivered to fragments.—Meantime, he was compelled, as others had been, to adjust a balance of political forces in the cabinet, and to find, as if he had been a weaker man, that it was not in the power of his will to make them work. As Lord Eldon classified them, pen in hand, it came out clear before his eyes that Protestantism was in as much danger as ever. Of the thirteen, he marks six as favourers of the Catholic claims, saying, “ the other seven are as yet for Protestants, but some *very loose*. You will observe Dudley, Huskisson, Grant, Palmerston, and Lyndhurst, (five,) were all *Canningites*, with whom the rest were, three weeks ago, in most violent contest and opposition. These things are to me quite marvellous. How they are all to deal with each other’s conduct as to the late treaty with Turkey, and the Navarino battle, is impossible to conjecture. Viscountess Canning has written a long letter, as Lord Ashley tells me, to Huskisson, strongly reproaching him for joining (I use Ashley’s own expression) her husband’s murderers.”—From Mr. Huskisson’s own explanations of his position, it appears that this statement concerning him is substantially true. In the first grief on his friend’s loss, he uttered expressions which were certainly received as a pledge that he would never enter office in conjunction with those who had left Mr. Canning in the lurch. His words, as avowed by himself, were, “ that his wounds were too green and too fresh to admit of his serving in the same cabinet with those who had deserted the service of the country, at the time his friend’s administration was formed.” Yet here he was now, in office under the Duke of Wellington, and by the side of Mr. Peel ! We cannot wonder at the irritation of Mr. Canning’s family ; and we are, judging by the event, sorry that Mr. Huskisson entered this cabinet : but we must remember the strangeness of the time, which confounded all calculations, and made sport of all consistencies. This, of itself, would guard us against a peremptory judgment : but we also know that Mr. Huskisson’s acceptance of office was proved by the oldest and most valued friends of Mr. Canning. Still, the general feeling was that Mr. Huskisson passed at this time under a cloud from which he never again emerged in full brightness.

It was in his former office, the Colonial, that he remained : and Lord Dudley remained in the Foreign Office. Mr. Grant was President of the Board of

1828.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii, 27.

Memoir of Huskisson, p. 117.

Memoir of Huskisson, p. 148.

1828.

Trade, and Treasurer of the Navy ; and Lord Palmerston Secretary at War. These were (what we may call) the semi-liberal members of the administration. Mr. Herries remained ; but in an office,—Master of the Mint,—which need not bring him into collision with Mr. Huskisson ; while Mr. Goulburn succeeded to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Mr. Peel succeeded Lord Lansdowne at the Home Office. Lord Lyndhurst remained Chancellor, and Lord Bathurst held the office,—President of the Council,—which Lord Eldon had hoped to be able to accept or refuse. One of the most important appointments was that of the Marquess of Anglesey to the Viceroyalty of Ireland, in the place of Lord Wellesley.

This administration was nearly the same as that which had existed under Lord Liverpool ; the only important changes being that Mr. Canning and Lord Eldon were absent, and Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Dudley present in their stead. But the men were altered. The spirit of the time had changed them ; and it was no more the same government that had existed under Lord Liverpool than if it had been composed of other men.

KING'S SPEECH.

There was great eagerness throughout the country to see how much would be said in the King's Speech about the great existing subjects of interest, that men might know what to expect from the new government. There was not a syllable about Ireland or the Catholic Association ; and nothing about Corn. There were intimations of improving prosperity at home ; a recommendation to inquire diligently into Financial affairs ; in other words, to appoint the proposed Finance Committee ; a notification that the troops had returned from Portugal, their appearance there having answered the purposes for which they were sent ; and about half the Speech related to affairs in the East. One paragraph supplied matter of debate in both Houses, and of party offence, for some time after ; and there are persons who have not got over it to this day. The paragraph was this : " Notwithstanding the valour displayed by the combined fleet, His Majesty deeply laments that this conflict (of Navarino) should have occurred with the naval force of an ancient ally ; but he still entertains a confident hope that this untoward event will not be followed by further hostilities, and will not impede that amicable adjustment of the existing differences between the Porte and the Greeks, to which it is so manifestly their common interest to accede." Few words have excited more debate, or more passion in their time, than this word " untoward." To us, after the lapse of years, it seems a simple affair enough,—this application of the word " untoward " to an event which, originating in a sort of accident, ought to have involved us in war with Turkey, and might have brought us into collision with Russia. But the word was hardly looked upon at all with simplicity, as in cases where no passion is concerned. The late administration regarded it as implying censure on their policy ; and the officers in the Mediterranean as impeaching their judgment ; and the more on account of the compliment to their valour. According to some, Russia was made suspicious. According to others, France was made angry. In short, it was a season when all men were on the watch for symptoms, and when many were implicated in great public affairs on new and doubtful grounds ; and in such circumstances, a single word may become the rallying point of a whole rabble of passions. The observer of those times is curious to know whether the framers of the Speech would have changed the

Annual Register,
1828, p. 23.

word, or the paragraph, if they could have seen the excitement that would ensue; and whether they could have found any other expression that would have conveyed their meaning with less offence.

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At home, the whole affair ended in debate. There were motions for explanation, and to obtain the thanks of parliament for the British officers engaged at Navarino;—motions which were withdrawn when the objects of debate were accomplished:—but there was no war. Russia was quite willing to undertake that part of the consequences of the “untoward event:” and the Porte had enough to do to cope with Russia, without insisting on war with England and France.

On the departure of the ambassadors from Constantinople on the 8th of December, the Turkish government protested against the resident Christians being put under the protection of the Netherlands ambassador, and claimed the office of protector for itself. Four days after the departure of the Russian ambassador, the Turkish Wezeer wrote to the Russian Minister a remonstrance against the act, as one apparently unauthorized by either government, and likely to convey a false impression of the hostile disposition of the Porte. To this no answer was returned. Three weeks afterwards,—just at the time when Lord Goderich was going out,—a document sent by the Wezeer to all the governors of provinces in the Turkish dominions was made public, which revealed the whole state of the case. The Turkish government made great complaint of the publication of this document, and insisted upon its being regarded as a mere letter of private instructions, addressed to its own servants. The world had nothing to do with the mode in which it had got abroad. The contents were what other powers had concern with; and these were such as to put an end to all disguise, and render further duplicity needless. This document declared that the coming war was, under political pretences, a religious war: that the Christian powers desired to place the infidels over the heads of the faithful in all countries where they lived intermingled, in order to overthrow the institutions of the Prophet: that all the negotiations which had been entered into, all the humility towards the Christian powers, all the apparent apathy about the loss of the fleet at Navarino, had been merely for the purpose of gaining time for military preparations; and that it was needless to explain that in the cause of Islamism, there was no obligation to keep faith with infidels: that it was of the utmost consequence to defer the outbreak of war till the summer approached; and that every art had been employed, and would be employed, to protract the negotiations till that time: and that meanwhile, every effort must be used by the officers of the empire to make the people understand that this was a holy war, in which failure was a misfortune too great to be contemplated, as not only would the faithful and the infidels be made to exchange social positions, but the mosques would be converted into churches, and perhaps profaned by the sound of bells. “Let the faithful then,” this document concluded, “have no thought of their arrears, or of pay of any kind. Let us sacrifice willingly our properties and our persons, and struggle, body and soul, for the support of our religion. The worshippers of the Prophet have no other means of working out their salvation in this world and the next.”—After this, there could be no doubt of what would happen; and preparations for war went on in both countries. In this same month of

Annual Register,
1828, p. 222.

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Annual Register,
1828, p. 223.

January, lists were made of the Christians resident in Constantinople, and they were ordered off, with very few exceptions. Even the Armenians, subjects of the Porte, were treated like the foreign merchants, or worse. Some of the most respectable were put into prison, and about twelve thousand were banished. The Bosphorus was closed; and the corn in the vessels of any nation, then in harbour, was seized. Reinforcements were sent to the fortresses on the Danube; and a great camp was formed near Adrianople. The loss of the fleet was a terrible misfortune, as it left Russia mistress of the Black Sea: but all that could be done was done, in the interval before April, when the Emperor formally declared war against the Porte. Thus stood matters six months after the battle of Navarino. No terms had been obtained for the Greeks; and if there was some respite and impunity for them, it was obtained only by the approach of that Russian war with the Porte which it had been a chief object with England and France to control, by joining in the Treaty of London.

FINANCE COM-
MITTEE.Hansard, xviii.
416.

The Finance Committee, which had been the occasion of the misunderstandings in Lord Goderich's cabinet, was moved for by Mr. Peel on the 15th of February, and voted for, almost unanimously. It consisted of twenty-three members, of whom two were Mr. Herries and Mr. Huskisson. The latter begged at first to be excused, on account of the pressure of business in his own office: but the wish for his presence in Committee was so strong and general, that he yielded. The Report of this Committee was delivered in too late to admit of many of its recommendations being immediately adopted: but one discovery which it made very early caused the speedy passage of a short Bill, to suspend the Act for granting Government Life Annuities, till a better basis should have been found for the calculations of the duration of life. When Mr. Perceval brought in, in 1808, his Bill, authorizing the sale of these annuities, the calculations were based on Dr. Price's tables. Whether these tables were originally inaccurate, or whether the duration of human life had improved since they were framed, they were certainly now causing the Government annuities to be sold too low. There was also some curious speculation going forward, against which no Minister could be expected to be on his guard, till warned by experience. Speculators bought annuities on the lives of persons whose chances of longevity were usually strong. On careful inquiry, it appeared to these speculators that the most long-lived class of men is that of Scotch gardeners: and many were the hale Scotch gardeners picked out, and, for a consideration, made government annuitants. It had occurred to Mr. Finlayson that some national loss was sustained through these annuities; and he entered into calculations which proved to him that the loss was great. He went to Lord Bexley in 1819, and told him his views: and he was directed to prosecute his inquiries. Now, on looking to the outstanding annuities, Mr. Finlayson calculated that the rate of mortality, instead of being one in forty, was only one in fifty-six, and that the average of female life especially, was much longer than had been supposed. The loss to the public was estimated at £95,000 a year;—nearly £8,000 a month. Nothing could be done with the sales which had been actually made; but by the Act now quickly passed, the process was to be stopped till better terms were provided.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 71.

Hansard, xix. 683.

When the Estimates were brought forward, it was proposed to grant a pen-

sion of £3,000 a year to Mr. Canning's family, in the person of one of his sons. Mr. Canning had, as every one knew, no private fortune. He would have become wealthy in India; and, if he was kept at home for the public service, it was clearly the duty of the public whom he served, to the sacrifice of wealth, to see that his family did not suffer from poverty. He had held no sinecures; and had received nothing but the salary of the offices he filled. There had been no time to lay by a provision for his family, even if his income had admitted of such accumulation: and his death was sudden and untimely. It appears a clear case enough; one in which there could be but one opinion and one voice. The sum proposed to be granted to Mr. Canning's son was from a special fund, to which his father would have become entitled, if he had lived to the expiration of two years from his entrance upon his last office. Reasonable as the claim and the method appear to be, and as they appeared to most persons at the time, so strong an opposition was raised that the matter was twice debated at great length. The objections were some on the score of economy; some on that of the mischief of the precedent; and many more on that of dissatisfaction with Mr. Canning's policy. It is impossible to avoid supposing that the opposition arose mainly from the feelings which, a year ago, had been brought to bear upon Mr. Canning himself, and which the events of the interval had not calmed down or chastened. There was but too little improvement visible in the tone of some who might have learned moderation from the affecting lessons of the preceding months. The Opposition consisted of 54 in a House of 216. Mr. Bankes perhaps went further than anyone else when he proposed to charge to Mr. Canning the expenses of the battle of Navarino, and of the Mediterranean fleet, in connection with it. The Ministers were eager to promote the grant,—one and all,—and the more eager perhaps for the doubtful or hostile terms on which they had been latterly with the departed statesman: and the economists among them could be as hearty as the rest, without drawback, as they could show that this pension would involve no charge to the country. It was merely the transference of a sum from an existing fund to Mr. Canning's son, in lieu of his father, who must have had it, if he had lived. It was for the lives of both sons that the pension was granted, as the elder was in the navy, and thereby exposed to many casualties. Five months afterwards, he was drowned in bathing at Madeira,—died in the reservoir into which he plunged after being extremely heated by exercise. He was post-captain in the navy; and fresh sympathy was awakened towards the family when its new representative came to this mournful and untimely end.

1828.

PENSION TO MR.
CANNING'S FA-
MILY.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 263.

The great interest of the session was the debate and division on the proposed Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Lord John Russell moved, on the 26th of February, that there should be a Committee of the whole House to consider of these Acts. In his speech, he gave the history of the Acts, clearly showing that they bore no relation to present times and circumstances, but to some long past and widely different. The Dissenters might be, or appear, dangerous to the House of Stuart; but they were certainly loyal subjects of the House of Hanover, and did not deserve to be excluded from civil office by the Corporation Act: and, as to the Test Act,—it was originally intended as a barrier to the Church against the King, who was a converted

REPEAL OF DIS-
SENTERS' DISABILI-
TIES.

Hansard, xviii.
676.

1828.

Papist. The circumstances were antiquated, and so were the restrictions; and it was time, for the credit of English understandings, that they should be repealed. The disqualifications of Dissenters were presented very forcibly to the House, by a succession of speakers, and seen at once to be both disgraceful, and in other ways injurious.—The government opposition was conducted by Mr. Peel and Mr. Huskisson. It was not surprising in those days, however it might be now, that Mr. Peel was on the side of old fashion and orthodox assumption: but that Mr. Huskisson should appear in behalf of intolerance and injury for opinion, was mortifying to those who appreciated him most. Both, however, were as feeble as the friends of religious liberty could desire; their ground was the narrowest and the most temporary that could be held: and it was taken solely because there was no other. Both admitted the principles involved in Lord John Russell's motion and speech: but Mr. Peel argued that the Dissenters did not really suffer, as they were incessantly relieved by Indemnity Bills: and Mr. Huskisson feared injury to the Catholic cause by releasing the Dissenters from a condition of disability which kept them vigilant on the subject of the rights of conscience, and from the insult that it would be to the Catholics to release others from disabilities while theirs remained. The House decided in favour of the Committee by a majority of 44 in a House of 430. Mr. Peel had, happily, declared his belief that the existence of the Church of England was not bound up with these restrictions: so he could give up the contest, and bow to the will of parliament, without such struggles and agonies as those of Lord Eldon and others, who believed that all was over now with the true Protestant religion in our country.

Hansard, xviii.
781.

The question arising,—what was the government now to do?—it was a matter of importance to decide whether the rejection of the expected Bill should be secured in the Upper House, or whether government should provide such securities, to be attached to the Bill, as might make it least objectionable. This last course was decided on,—the will of the Commons being so declared as to make the thought of opposition too hazardous. After the Bill had been read twice, and when the House was about to go into Committee, Mr. Sturges Bourne proposed the substitution of a Declaration for the Sacramental Test;—a declaration of the person entering upon office that he would not use any of the powers or influence of his office for the subversion of the Established Church. And, as there would be some absurdity in regarding such a Declaration from officials in the service of the Crown, another clause was proposed, which rendered it optional with the Crown to require or omit the Declaration. There was nothing in the first of these proposals to which the Dissenters could object so seriously as to endanger the Bill, as they had no thought of taking office for the purpose of injuring the Church, but only for the sake of doing the duties and enjoying the rights of equal citizenship: and they were pleased at the second clause, because it left open a probability that the Declaration itself,—the last badge of difference on account of their religious opinions,—would fall into disuse. They therefore contented themselves with protesting, through their advocates in the House, against the imposition of any badge whatever; and pushed their Bill. When it arrived in the Upper House, the Duke of Wellington spoke in its favour, saying that the only reason why the government had at first opposed it in the Commons was that

Hansard, xviii.
1183.

Hansard, xviii.
1502.

the system had appeared to work well hitherto; but, as it was clear that the Commons thought the time was come for a change, and as the principle of the old exclusion or opprobrium was not in itself defensible, he now thought it the duty of the Peers to pass the bill, if they were satisfied, as he was, that the Declaration afforded sufficient security against injury to the Established Church. Thus was it regarded by government, and by some of the Spiritual Peers; the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of Lincoln, Durham, and Chester, speaking in favour of the bill. "We who oppose," says Lord Eldon, "shall be in but a wretched minority, though the individuals who compose it will, as to several, I think, be of the most respectable class of Peers: but the administration have,—to their shame be it said,—got the archbishops and most of the bishops to support this revolutionary bill." Again: "All the Whig Lords will be against us: as government began in the Commons by opposition, and then ran away like a parcel of cowards, I suppose government also will be against us; but what is most calamitous of all is, that the archbishops and several bishops are also against us. What they can mean, they best know, for nobody else can tell—and, sooner or later, perhaps in this very year—almost certainly in the next—the concessions to the Dissenters must be followed by the like concessions to the Roman Catholics. That seems unavoidable; though, at present, the policy is to conceal this additional purpose." We should like to know how many influential members of both Houses entertained this expectation, at this date of April, 1828. On the 12th of the month, the Chancellor again writes, "We, as we think ourselves, sincere friends of the Church of England, mean to fight, as well as we can, on Thursday next, against this most shameful bill in favour of the Dissenters, which has been sent up to us from the Commons—a Bill which Peel's declaration in the House as to the probability of its passing in the Lords, has made it impossible to resist with effect. . . . If the Lords won't at least alter it, which I don't believe they will, I don't see how, if the Commons act consistently with themselves, Sir F. Burdett can fail in his motion on the 29th, in favour of the Roman Catholics. The state of minds and feelings in the Tory part, and aristocratical part, of the friends of Liverpool's administration is, at present, excessively feverish, and they support Ministers, because they know not where to look for others. It is obvious that the Ministers who were Canning's followers, to use a vulgar phrase, rule the roast, or at least have too much influence." In his speeches Lord Eldon declared his principle broadly: and he was so angry with the bishops, and so pertinacious with his amendments, that it is clear that he considered this measure of the last importance, from its involving release from all religious disabilities, as well as those of Protestant Dissenters. He said, "The Constitution required that the Church of England should be supported; and the best way of affording that support to her was to admit only her own members to offices of trust and emolument." Most people thought, by this time, that Lord Eldon's method was likely to be fatal to the Church, by inflicting injury and indignity on nearly half the population of Great Britain and Ireland;—for to that number did Protestant Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews, now amount. Lord Eldon declared, "that if he stood alone, he would go below the bar, and vote against the bill; and were he called that night to

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Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 37, 38.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 42.

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render his account before Heaven, he would go with the consoling reflection that he had never advocated anything mischievous to his country." The Lords would not receive his proposed amendments; and he was very unhappy;—"hurt, distressed and fatigued," he declares, "by what has lately been passing in the House of Lords. I have fought like a lion, but my talons have been cut off."

Such amendments as the Lords did pass were called "poor things" by the old earl: but there was one whose practical bearing would have gratified his bigotry, if he could have foreseen it. It would have solaced him to know that the principle of exclusion from offices of citizenship for religious opinion was to be extended and perpetuated by a sort of accident. The Bishop of Llandaff proposed to add to the declaration a few words expressive of belief in Christianity. This was in consequence of a hint from Lord Harewood: not because he supposed it necessary, but merely decorous. He proposed it "for the credit of parliament." These words were, "on the true faith of a Christian."

Hansard, xviii.
1535.

By the carrying of this clause, the Jews have since been excluded from offices which they were before competent to hold. This was not the first time that the Jews were unintentionally wronged by measures proposed to affect a different party. As Lord Holland informed the House, there was nothing to keep Jews out of Parliament since the reign of Charles II., except the Abjuration Oath, which was introduced into the Toleration Act,—the Act brought in against the adherents of the House of Stuart. And now they were again excluded,—freshly wronged,—by words which were imposed, not for any purpose of necessity, but for the credit of parliament! However much a subject of regret, it is not one of surprise to those who have experimental knowledge of the operation of laws restrictive on Opinion. The principle of mutual judgment for matters of Opinion, and of legislative partiality for Opinion, is so radically unjust and mischievous that it ought to be no matter of surprise if the injury spread beyond its designed bounds, and the tyranny works out retributive consequences. Lord Holland entered his protest against

Hansard, xix. 158.

these words on the Journals of the House, "Because the introduction of the words 'upon the true faith of a Christian' implies an opinion in which I cannot conscientiously concur, namely, that a particular faith in matters of religion is necessary to the proper discharge of duties purely political or temporal." And also because it had been found, in preceding cases, that a suspension of this clause had taken place in regard to persons not contemplated in the imposition of the Declaration. The amendments of the Lords were agreed to by the Commons, and in the beginning of May, the Bill, which, in its finished state, Lord Eldon characterized as being, in his "poor judgment, as bad, as mischievous, and as revolutionary, as the most captious Dissenter would wish it to be," received the royal assent. Lord Eldon's only idea of a Dissenter was that he was a captious and revolutionary man, always bent upon the destruction of the Church of England: and, this being the image in his eye, we may pity him for the terror of his soul. A wiser man, who knew something of Dissenters, and of their strong resemblance to other men, felt happier on the occasion. Lord Holland said, that in performing the pleasing duty of moving "that this Bill do pass," he could not refrain from expressing his feelings in

Hansard, xix. 49.

Hansard, xix. 186.

language both of gratitude and congratulation—gratitude to the House, for the manner in which it had discharged its duty to the country, and congratulation to the country upon the achievement of so glorious a result.

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This was universally considered the great measure of the session,—the great achievement of the year: and it was no small achievement to have obtained an equal position of citizenship for as loyal and peaceable and principled a set of men as any in the kingdom. The credit is due, not to either the aristocratic or the liberal section of rulers and their adherents, but to the liberal members of each House unconnected with government. Government yielded only when it could not resist.—And now, men looked anxiously to see what would be done about the Catholics, after this practical protest against exclusion from office on account of Religious Opinion.

CHAPTER V.

1828.

DISSENSIONS IN
THE CABINET.

MORE dissensions in the Cabinet! There had been rumours about hidden troubles there as early as March; and when the Corn Bill was brought forward on the 31st of that month, it became clear that there had been difficulties among its framers. It could hardly be otherwise when Mr. Huskisson was necessarily the chief authority in the matter, and the Duke of Wellington, who had thrown out the Bill of the preceding year, was the head of the government. His principle of prohibition was disavowed by the government in regard to the present Bill. The measure was declared to be in principle exactly that of last session: but the duties proposed were higher. It was generally understood that the Premier had met with a firmer adherence to Mr. Canning's measure than he expected among his colleagues; and he yielded,—as he had now become practised in doing. He had yielded to the expediency of taking the Premiership, after openly declaring that he should be mad if he ever did such a thing. He had yielded to the necessity of forming a mixed Cabinet, when the King had hoped to have an united one by placing him at the head. He had yielded to the emancipation of the Dissenters; and he now yielded his own particular objection to the Corn Bill. Truly, it was now evidently too late to look for the old-fashioned “consistency” which had been formerly the first requisite in statesmanship. If it was not to be found in the honest, resolute, imperious Wellington, it need not be looked for anywhere:—or rather, it must be admitted that consistency meant now something different from what it used to mean. The Duke went, with a good grace, through the process of bringing forward the government Corn Bill, destitute of the provision which he had thought indispensable a year before, and of any substitute for it: and his liberal colleagues did not pretend to approve of the higher rate of duties. It was a compromise throughout. The agricultural interest complained of the absence of all prohibitory provisions; and other interests complained of the duties, and of the point at which they were fixed;—the pivot-point from which ascent and descent of duties began, which they conceived to be virtually raised from 60s. to 64s. by the increased duties charged on the intervening prices. But the Bill passed on the 26th of June.—Mr. Huskisson made no secret of his opinions on the Corn Laws. He condemned them in themselves, but thought they could not be abolished in the existing state of affairs. “However expedient to prevent other evils, in the present state of the country,” he said, “they are in themselves a burthen and a restraint upon its manufacturing and commercial industry.” The Cabinet compromise appearing to be successful as far as this Bill was concerned, it was supposed that the disagreements in the government were surmounted, and that all might now go on smoothly. But it was not to be.

There had been in February a serious call for explanations from the Duke

Hansard, xix.
1524.

Memoir of Hus-
kisson, p. 167.

of Wellington and Mr. Huskisson about some expressions of the latter, uttered to his constituents at Liverpool on his late re-election; and both made these explanations in parliament. Mr. Huskisson was reported to have said on the hustings that he did not enter upon office under the Duke without having obtained from him guarantees that Mr. Canning's policy would be followed out. The Duke, of course, rejected with scorn the idea that any gentleman would propose to him any guarantee of the sort; or that he could for an instant listen to such a proposal. "Is it to be supposed," said the Duke, "that the right hon. gentleman to whom I suppose the noble earl to allude, could have used the expressions ascribed to him at the Liverpool election? If my right hon. friend had entered into any such corrupt bargain as he was represented to describe, he would have tarnished his own fame, as much as I should have disgraced mine. It is much more probable—though I have not thought it worth my while to ask for any explanation on the subject—that my right hon. friend stated, not that he had concluded any wholesale bargain with me, but that the men of whom the government is now composed are in themselves a guarantee to the public, that their measures will be such as will be conducive to his Majesty's honour and interests, and to the happiness of the people." And Mr. Huskisson, supported by abundance of needless testimony, declared that this was nearly what he did mean and say;—namely, that in the composition of the Cabinet would be found a sufficient guarantee for the carrying out of a liberal policy.—Still, though this matter was cleared up, affairs did not work easily; and a disruption of the Cabinet took place in May,—the immediate occasion being a misunderstanding between the same two members of the government.

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Hansard, xviii.
286.Hansard, xviii
481.

Mr. Huskisson's popularity was somewhat declining. He had lost some of the sympathy of the country by re-entering office with Mr. Canning's enemies; and when it was seen with what different Ministries he could sit in Cabinet, and how, among many changes, he, the bosom friend of Canning, could abide in office, the old sneer—of his being a "political adventurer"—was revived, with perhaps greater effect than in a more aristocratic time. The events of this month of May damaged his reputation seriously; and he never, during the short remainder of his life, got over it. Those who knew him well, and those who, not knowing him, were duly sensible of the compass and value of his policy, understood his feelings so as to acquit him of everything morally wrong; of everything in the least questionable about personal honour;—of everything but uncertainty and error of judgment: but they could not complain of the world in general for forming a somewhat severer judgment. Those who knew the man understood his sensitiveness about responsibility,—his timidity about breaking up the government of the country on account of difficulties of his own. And those who appreciated the importance of his Free-Trade policy,—the charge of which he could not depute to any one till some were educated up to his point,—could well understand that he would bear with much, and hesitate long, before he would vacate a position in which alone he could effectually promote that policy. He seems indeed to have lingered too long; and to have mismanaged his method of retiring, so as to have made his secession look too much like an expulsion from the Cabinet; but those who knew his state of health, his need and desire of rest and travel,

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and his suffering in public life since the death of his friend, were well aware that his self-regards would have led him into private life long before. We cannot doubt that he often wished that he had followed his inclinations. Many and many a time within the last eight months must he have wished that he had resisted the desire of the King and Lord Goderich, and, seeing more clearly than they, remained abroad: and from this time,—this May, 1828,—he could have had few but bitter thoughts connected with the last stages of his public career. His final ministerial struggle is a strange instance of strong impulse followed by infirmity of purpose.

EAST RETFORD
BILL.

Hansard, xviii. 83.

Bills were brought into parliament to disfranchise the boroughs of Penryn and East Retford; the movers—Lord John Russell and Mr. Tennyson proposing to transfer the franchise to Manchester and Birmingham. About the disposal of the franchise there were two opinions; one that it should be given to the neighbouring hundreds; the other that it should be transferred to populous towns. Mr. Peel, whose opinion was the most important in the House, had declared that, if there were two boroughs to dispose of, he should advocate the transference in one case to a town, and in the other to the neighbouring hundreds. Mr. Huskisson had declared that if there were but one, he should be for giving it to a town. The Penryn case was first sent up to the Lords, and the East Retford case was discussed in the Commons, on the 19th of May, under a persuasion on the part of the government that the Penryn bill would be thrown out by the Lords; so that there would be only one borough to deal with. Here arose the ministerial difficulty. The Government opposed, through Mr. Peel, the transference of the franchise to Birmingham, while Mr. Huskisson felt himself bound by his previous declaration to vote for that transference. Lord Sandon expressly claimed his vote on this ground: and he did not see how he could refuse it; though some suggested

Hansard, xix. 808.

that he might avoid voting against his colleagues, on the pretext that the House of Lords had not yet decided on the Penryn Bill. Mr. Huskisson himself earnestly wished for an adjournment of the subject, that Mr. Peel and himself might have an opportunity of coming to some understanding: but he could not carry this point; and he voted against his colleagues.—At the moment, he did not see that he could remain in office: or, at least, that he could avoid offering to resign. He went home, at two o'clock in the morning, with the buzz of the excited House in his ears, and the significant countenances of colleagues and opponents before his eyes; exhausted with fatigue after sixteen hours' attention to business; feeble in health and sick at heart; and, instead of waiting for the morrow to consider, when refreshed and composed, what he should do, he sat down, and wrote to the Duke of Wellington, a letter which was intended by Mr. Huskisson to be an offer to resign, but understood by the Duke to be an actual and formal resignation.

Hansard, xix. 928.

MR. HUSKISSON'S
RESIGNATION.

Hansard, xix. 924-938.

—The Duke received the letter before ten the next morning—was surprised—did not think the superscription "Private and Confidential" had any bearing on the purport of the letter, and made all haste to lay it before the King as a formal resignation. Friend after friend went to him, on Mr. Huskisson's behalf; but the Duke would acknowledge no mistake or undue haste on his own part. Mr. Huskisson wrote one explanatory letter after another; but still the Duke declared the resignation to have been positive: and if so, and if the

Duke wished it to be irrevocable, it was irrevocable. The truth plainly was, that Mr. Huskisson was first mistaken in his estimate of the fatal character of his vote; next, hasty in writing to the Duke under exhaustion and perturbation, though his impulse was worthy and honourable; and, finally, too slow to accept the consequences of his own act. The Duke was clearly less anxious about a disruption of his Cabinet than pleased at the occurrence of a fair opportunity to dismiss the "Canningites." He offered one option to Mr. Huskisson, to withdraw his letter: but, as that act would have stultified the writer in regard to all his subsequent explanations, it could not, of course, be thought of. After a miserable series of negotiations, explanations, remonstrances, accidents, and mistakes, so many as to suggest an idea of fatality, Mr. Huskisson's office was filled up on the 25th of May. Painfully as he had shrunk from the risk of disturbing the government, lest the country should lose the benefit of a continuance of Mr. Canning's policy, Mr. Huskisson was now compelled to witness, as a consequence of that little letter of his, the retirement of all the "Canningites." Lord Palmerston, Lord Dudley, Mr. Lamb (afterwards Lord Melbourne), and Mr. Grant resigned, and were succeeded by Sir Henry Hardinge, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Francis Egerton, and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald. Mr. Huskisson's place was filled by Sir George Murray.

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Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 191.

CHANGES IN THE
CABINET.

At last, here was a cabinet such as the King desired, and had hoped to have in January; a cabinet, in which the affairs of the country could be managed as in old days, and on good old principles. Were the King and the Duke happy at last?

The King could not much enjoy anything at present. In the preceding year, Lord Eldon had remarked a serious decline in his health; and he did not seem to be rallying. His state of health and nerve, of temper and spirits, enhanced the difficulties of his Ministers, which were serious enough, without that addition. Lord Eldon declared, a few days after Mr. Huskisson's retirement, "The Minister will have great difficulties to struggle with. The Whigs, the Canningites, and the Huskissonites, will join, and be very strong. With the exception of Lord Lonsdale, the great Tory parliamentary lords are not propitiated by the new arrangements, and many of them will be either neuter or adverse." But a more serious difficulty was arising than any caused by this phalanx of foes.

Life of Lord El-
don, iii. 45.

In the debate on the Dissenters' Bill, the Duke had said, while showing how unconnected he conceived this bill to be with the Catholic cause, "there is no person in this House whose feelings and sentiments, after long consideration, are more decided than mine are with regard to the subject of the Roman Catholic claims; and until I see a great change in that question, I certainly shall oppose it." Recently as this had been said, there was already "a great change." The Duke had not yet, perhaps, done yielding. It was a pity he had not yet learned to refrain from engaging for future states of his mind.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 104.
CATHOLIC QUES-
TION.

On the 8th of May, after the passing of the Dissenters' bills, and before the resignation of Mr. Huskisson and his liberal colleagues, the Catholic question was brought forward by Sir F. Burdett. The debate, which occupied three evenings, ended with the adoption of a resolution, that it was expedient to consider the state of the laws affecting Roman Catholics, in order to such an adjustment as might be satisfactory to all parties. There was now a majority

Hansard, xix. 375.

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Hansard, xix. 767.

of six, where in the preceding session there had been a minority of four. It was thought advisable, considering the excitement caused by every movement on this question, to learn, before going further, what the Lords were likely to do ; and a conference took place on the 19th, when the Managers for the Peers received the resolution of the Commons. The 9th of June was the day appointed for the consideration of the resolution. Before that day arrived, a "great change" took place, which produced an immediate effect on the tone of the Duke of Wellington.

During Mr. Canning's short administration the Catholics had been very quiet. The Premier was their friend ; and a powerful one. During Lord Goderich's short administration, they had been suspicious and restless. The Premier was their friend ; but he was a powerless one. When the Duke of Wellington assumed office, they became violent ; for then the Premier was their enemy. O'Connell boasted that no law should or could put down the Catholic Association ; and it was, in fact, as active as ever. Their success in such of the elections as they had carried,—a great success following upon a sudden thought, without any preparation or previous consultation,—had taught them what to do next, by showing them what a vast electoral power they held in their command of "the Forties," as O'Connell called the forty shilling freeholders. Vigorous preparations were made for the next general election. Missionaries were sent out to rouse and instruct the Forties throughout Ireland ; the priests gave all their influence to the cause ; and O'Connell spent his days in abusing the Duke of Wellington, and exciting hatred towards England. The exasperation of the landlords of the Forties was extreme. They found the priests and the great Catholic leader everywhere, interfering with their tenantry, and rousing the ignorant population of their estates to what they called insubordination. Till now it was a thing unheard of that the tenantry of a landed proprietor should not vote as his landlord desired. To obtain their votes, the proprietors had cut up their lands into forty-shilling freeholds, and had covered their estates with an indigent population ; and now, this political power, for which they had sacrificed everything,—including the welfare of the indigent tenantry themselves,—was turned against them by the priests and the agents of the Association. The enmity was so fierce, and the mutual injuries so exasperating, that it seemed as if a dissolution of society must take place. While the Tory peers were fearing for the church and the purity of the constitution if the Catholics were emancipated, men of wider views saw that society itself must fall to pieces in Ireland if they were not. It was in the midst of this state of things, and before the Lords had debated the Catholic question for this year, that Mr. Huskisson and his colleagues went out, and some new elections must take place on the assumption of office by their successors.

CLARE ELECTION.

Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, who represented the county of Clare, was the successor of Mr. Grant, as President of the Board of Trade. He was in favour of the Catholic claims ; and neither he, nor any one else in England, doubted his being returned, as a matter of course, with the hearty good-will of the Catholics. But the Catholics seized the opportunity of bringing their cause to a crisis. Their leaders resolved that Mr. O'Connell should be elected ; and the thing was done with a high hand. The Catholics in London held a

meeting, and subscribed funds: and the Catholic Rent in Ireland yielded what else was wanted. The Irish people, though extremely docile to their leaders, were, to the lowest of the Forties, too acute not to see that there was little use in electing a representative who could not sit: and it was not enough for them that O'Connell declared, on his reputation as a lawyer, that there was nothing in the existing law which prevented his being elected. This was clear, of course; but not sufficient: so he proceeded to pronounce that he could sit in parliament and vote, without taking the oaths. The acute Irish naturally wondered what, in that case, became of their grievance of being unrepresented, and why O'Connell had not been there all this time. But Mr. O'Connell was not the only lawyer who avowed that opinion. Mr. Butler, an English Catholic barrister, published at this time a similar opinion, with the grounds assigned. So the electors thought they would try.

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The excitement was prodigious. In every corner of the county of Clare there was such preaching and haranguing, that to a spectator it looked more like a crusade than an election. As one of their patriots, Mr. Shiel, afterwards said, "Every altar was a tribune." If an orator arrived in the dead of the night, he had a crowd about him in five minutes. It was not all joyous excitement. There was misery enough in the midst of it; for the people were between two fires. They had their religion on the one hand, with all its awful threats, and their landlords on the other; for almost every landlord in the county exerted himself for Mr. Fitzgerald, and strove to engage his tenantry on the same side. In a position of such difficulty, the people had, naturally, recourse to their priests for guidance; and this decided the struggle, and left the landlords powerless.

The 30th of June was the day fixed for the polling; and in the mean time, while this extraordinary electioneering was fixing the attention of all men, the Catholic debate came on in the Lords. By a shrewd and quiet passage in a speech of Lord Eldon's, we learn that the electioneering of the Catholics was in the minds of the Peers during the debate. What Lord Eldon "wished particularly to notice on this occasion was, a recent proscription by their chief orator, of twenty-eight county and borough members. From the tone of confidence in which the speaker calculated on removing those obnoxious representatives, it appeared that the Roman Catholics had already sufficient elective power in their hands, and ought not to require that it should be increased." The interest of the debate lay in the speech of the Duke of Wellington. Amidst declarations of his sense of the difficulty and danger of making alterations, he impressed almost everybody with the idea that he saw yet more danger in making no changes. His complaints of the present agitation of the subject were chiefly on the ground that it prevented such consultation and mutual understanding as might take place if people's minds were at rest. The concluding words are remarkable now, as showing how a man, who considered himself eminently practical, could set his mind, and well-nigh stake his statesmanship, on impossibilities; and they were felt to be so remarkable at the time for what they foreboded, that they were repeated everywhere as a cause for either hope or dread. He said—

"There is also one fact respecting the state of things in Ireland, to which I should wish to call your lordships' attention. From 1781 to 1791, during

Life of Lord Eldon iii. 52.

Hansard, xix. 1291.

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which many troublesome questions with respect to that country were discussed, the Roman Catholic question was in fact never heard of; and so little was the question thought about, that when my noble and learned friend (Lord Redesdale) brought into the House of Commons, at that period, a bill respecting the Roman Catholics of England, it is a remarkable fact that the then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland was not only not consulted on the subject, but actually did not know of it until the bill was brought into parliament. So little did the Catholics of Ireland disturb the public mind at that moment, that the question was allowed to pass quietly by, almost without comment. If the public mind was now suffered to be thus tranquil—if the agitators of Ireland would only leave the public mind at rest—the people would become more satisfied, and I certainly think it would then be possible to do something.”

This, if not very wise, appeared significant. People smiled at the idea of going back now, voluntarily, into the indifference of a past time,—of pouring back the lava streams into the crater of the volcano; but they saw that the more this was found to be out of the question, the more inevitably would the ruling powers discover it to be “possible to do something.” We find, accordingly, in a letter of Lord Eldon’s, written soon afterwards—“O’Connell’s proceedings in Ireland, which you will see in the papers, and the supposed or real ambiguity which marked the Duke of Wellington’s speech, have led to a very general persuasion that the Ministry intend, or at least that the Duke intends, next session, to emancipate the Roman Catholics, as he has the Dissenters; and the world is uneasy.”

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 55.

The Clare election came on. Bands of the Forties were marched into Ennis, the county town, under the leadership of priests, and with the watchword “For God and O’Connell;”—the most intelligible expression to them of the adjuration “For God and our right.” Mr. Fitzgerald reasoned; Mr. O’Connell declaimed and bullied, using on the hustings language so insufferable, as to make the gentry of the county wonder what sort of an appearance he would make in parliament, if he should really ever get there. After a few days’ polling it was evident that Mr. Fitzgerald had no chance; and he withdrew. A protest against Mr. O’Connell’s election as illegal, was offered; and the matter was argued by counsel before the sheriff and his assessor. It was, of course, decided that the election was legal, the difficulty of admission to parliament consisting in the nature of the oaths to be tendered to the representative on his presenting himself in the House. No one could take upon himself to say beforehand that any man would not take the oaths. Mr. O’Connell was therefore returned, as elected by a majority of qualified freeholders; but the circumstances of the contest,—a notification of the religion of each candidate, and of the presentation of the protest,—were stated on the face of the return. A petition against his return was immediately presented to the House of Commons; but the session was nearly over, and nothing was done in regard to it. O’Connell was well pleased at this, as the recess was before him, for agitation in his new character of member of parliament; for as such he was extensively regarded in Ireland. He now gave out that Catholic representatives must be elected, as occasion offered, for all the counties of Ireland. The Catholic Association pushed its preparations for this

Annual Register, 1828, p. 126.

Annual Register, 1828, p. 128.

great effort; and it began by taking under its protection such of the Forties as had been ejected, or distrained upon for rent by their landlords, in consequence of their votes at the late election. Thus far the Association had acted in wary evasion of the Suppression Act. That Act expired in July; and the Association immediately afterwards met, with an ostentation of defiance, to discuss and push their measures. They could not be touched now till the next session; and the intervening months were diligently used. Many of the English Dissenters took part with them, subscribing funds for the Clare election, and preparing to aid them further by the use of their Nonconformist organization.

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Mr. O'Connell did not bring the question of his eligibility for parliament to an issue this session. His enemies said it "was manifest that he could do more mischief by prolonging his existence as a pretended M.P., than he could do if he was now to appear, and be turned out of the House of Commons."

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 55.

His party justified his absence on the ground that much might happen before the next session, to improve his chances of admission:—some crisis was evidently near at hand, which it might be well to await:—some new elections might possibly occur which might bring a group of Catholic representatives, instead of a single one, to the table of the House, and make the attempt much more imposing. Whatever were his reasons, Mr. O'Connell did not offer himself for admission to the House during the three weeks of the session which remained after his return as member for Clare.

"Nothing is talked of now which interests anybody the least in the world," writes Lord Eldon, on the 9th of July, "except the election of Mr. O'Connell, and the mischief that it will produce among debaters in the House of Commons, and the more serious mischief which it will, in all human probability, excite in Ireland. As O'Connell will not, though elected, be allowed to take his seat in the House of Commons, unless he will take the oaths, &c. (and that he won't do, unless he can get absolution,) his rejection from the Commons may excite rebellion in Ireland. At all events, this business must bring the Roman Catholic question, which has been so often discussed, to a crisis and a conclusion. The nature of that conclusion I don't think likely to be favourable to Protestantism. . . . We shall see whether our present rulers have the courage with which a Mr. Pitt would have acted under present circumstances. I don't expect it of them."—It is clear that the Clare election had already done some good. It had opened the eyes of the most haughty of the anti-Catholics to the fact, that the question was approaching its crisis and conclusion.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 54.

The next obvious effect was a singular one:—the conversion of some of the county members of Ireland who were strong in the Protestant interest. It has been seen that the Association was threatening and preparing to carry all the other Irish counties as it had carried Clare: and one part of its preparations was composing pledges which the Catholic candidates should be required to take. Even if the system of pledging had not been objectionable, these pledges must have been considered so in themselves, by every man of strict principle and independent mind: and every candidate who would not agree to them was to be opposed by the whole power of the Catholic Association. Already the old relations of landlord and tenant were broken up: and the landed pro-

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Annual Register;
1828, p. 130.

prietors who had fallen under the machinery of the Association, were humbled and disabled. Here was another mode of operation threatened, under which the political power of the Protestants was to be utterly crushed. The counties would be lost; or, if an existing member here and there held his position, it would be in a sort of vassalage to the Association, and at its mercy. The alarm operated very quickly in producing conversions among the Irish county representatives and their friends. So early as the 12th of August,—ten days after the moving of the pledges in the Association,—we find Mr. Dawson, brother-in-law of Mr. Peel, and hitherto a vehement anti-Catholic, publicly avowing a change of opinions which induced him now to desire and advocate Catholic Emancipation. Mr. Dawson was the head of the anti-Catholic party, in the Commons, and was in the service of the Crown: and whatever he said publicly was of consequence, not only to his party, but to the administration. What he now said, at a public dinner in Londonderry, was that the Catholic Association must clearly be either crushed or conciliated, or society must dissolve into its elements in Ireland. He did not pretend to suppose it could now be crushed; and he avowed his wish that it might be conciliated. An example like this was sure to be eagerly imitated by many of the sufferers under the present evils of society in Ireland: and the conversions went on rapidly. The Association cared little about them: for they were confident that they should soon have the government avowedly on their side. Notwithstanding all the disgrace with which Mr. Dawson was visited by the ministry, and all the disavowals of his relatives of any participation in what he had said, and all his protestations that he spoke for himself alone, the Catholic Association felt secure. He would not have said anything, they were certain, that could put him into radical opposition with the ruling powers, in whose immediate service he was. He might have been rash in speaking so soon and so broadly; but there could be no doubt that what he had said might be taken as a prophecy of good times to come. So the Association went on gaily and boastfully,—promising speedy victory, but neglecting no preparations for carrying on a long conflict, if need should be.

We find in a speech of Mr. Shiel's at this time, an account of the state of society in Ireland, which probably all parties, from Lord Eldon to Mr. O'Connell, would agree to be a fair representation. At one of the aggregate meetings, of which several were held during the parliamentary recess,—at the great Munster meeting,—Mr. Shiel said, "What has government to dread from our resentment in peace? An answer is supplied by what we actually behold. Does not a tremendous organization extend over the whole island? Have not all the natural bonds by which men are tied together, been broken and burst asunder? Are not all the relations of society, which exist elsewhere, gone? Has not property lost its influence—has not rank been stripped of the respect which should belong to it? and has not an internal government grown up which, gradually superseding the legitimate authorities, has armed itself with a complete domination? Is it nothing that the whole body of the clergy are alienated from the state, and that the Catholic gentry, and peasantry, and priesthood, are all combined in one vast confederacy? So much for Catholic indignation, while we are at peace: and when England shall be involved in war——. I pause; it is not necessary that I should discuss that branch of

the division, or point to the cloud which, charged with thunder, is hanging over our heads."

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No feature of Irish society alarmed government and all reflecting men more at that time than the sudden and almost total cessation of Irish crime. That which, if it had come about gradually, and as a consequence of improved education or prosperity, would have been hailed as the greatest of encouragements and blessings, was now ominous and most alarming, as showing the power of the Catholic leaders, and the strength of their organization. At the bidding of these leaders, feuds were suspended; factions met and acted as brethren; and men mastered their strongest propensities, in order to become a vast soldiery for the achievement of political objects. In almost every county, the judges on circuit congratulated the magistrates on the disappearance of atrocious crimes, and the paucity of even the lighter offences. The government would rather have had to deal with the average amount of Irish outrage than to witness a lull which boded a coming hurricane. Ireland was governed now by a power greater than their own.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 135.

On the expiration of the Suppression law in July, when the Catholic Association resumed its primitive form, the Orange Clubs sprang up again, affording a new cause of alarm. New Orange Associations were formed, under the name of Brunswick Clubs, which collected a Protestant Rent, and in every way imitated the Catholic organization. The strength of the Brunswick Clubs lay in the North: that of the Catholics in the South: but they did not, as the magistracy hoped, lie apart, railing at each other, without attempting collision. A rash and foolish Catholic agitator, Mr. Lawless, declared his intention of braving the British lion in its den,—its Irish den. He would visit "all the strongholds of the Orangemen." And he went, with tens of thousands at his heels, for no other purpose, as far as appears, than rousing the antagonism of the Orangemen. He advertised, for some time previously, his intention of entering such and such a town, attended by so many thousand Catholics; and, naturally enough, the town was entered, early on the appointed morning by troops of Orangemen,—many or most of them armed. This was not to be endured. The magistrates warned the people against attending these assemblages. The soldiery were kept on the alert. On one occasion, when the agitator himself was prevailed on by the magistrates and military commander to turn back, his followers got into a scuffle with the Protestant mob, and one man, a Catholic, was killed. The Catholic Association saw that this would never do. Their policy was one of peaceful parade; and they would enter into no competition of force with the Orange party. They put forth all their influence at once to stop the assemblages of their own body, to induce them to lay aside all uniforms, flags, and military music, and abstain from all provoking demonstrations. It was wonderful how promptly and thoroughly the leaders were obeyed. Bodies of men, in one case amounting to fifty thousand, marching on with flags, music, and uniform, were met on the road by a hortatory address of O'Connell's, and at once turned back and disbanded themselves, making no complaint of the loss of their pleasure, or of the money they had spent in their decorations. Throughout these perilous weeks, the legality and peaceableness were certainly on the side of the Catholics,—the rashness and vanity of some of their

Annual Register,
1828, p. 139.

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BRUNSWICK
CLUBS.
Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 59.

leaders being kept in check by the good sense and earnest patriotism of others; while of the Orangemen,—of the Brunswick Clubs,—even the old Tory, Lord Eldon, could find nothing more approbative to say than this,—in answer to a request for his opinion on the subject of forming a Brunswick Club in England: “Already very inconvenient questions seem to have been stated, whether the calls upon the people of the country have not, some of them, been expressed in such terms as make it questionable whether those who, in such terms, make such calls, act as legally as they ought.”—This is put so very delicately, that we may see how reluctantly the admission is made. He goes on: “It is true, those who may so complain may most justly be told that they have not so objected to the shamefully illegal proceedings of the Roman Catholic Association; and I think it not impossible that we may hear some abusing in parliament the proceedings of Protestant Associations who have mainly encouraged the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Association;—but this is an example not to be followed.” It is curious to see how utterly blind Lord Eldon was, even at this time, and with all his fears of the Liberals and his distrust of the government, to the real pressure of the case. No man talked more loudly of his terrors, or of expected apostasy in high places: yet what he anticipated was this, and no more.—“I look on the Roman Catholic question as, bit by bit, here a little and there a little, to be ultimately, and at no distant day carried. I have no conception that even Oxford will struggle effectually against the great church interests which will patronize that question, and those who support it in parliament.” It was too late for giving liberty “bit by bit; here a little and there a little.”

Life of Lord Eldon iii. 56.

The Protestant Clubs in England did not succeed very well. The people generally were disposed to leave the matter to the government. There was a meeting of twenty thousand people on Pennenden Heath in Kent, convened by Protestant leaders, and attended by some advocates of the Catholic cause. The petition to parliament proposed by the conveners was merely to declare attachment to our Protestant Constitution, and to pray that it might be preserved inviolate. Some noblemen present moved that the business of dealing with the Catholics should be left to the government: but the petition was adopted by a large majority. This was the only demonstration of any importance in England.

Annual Register, 1828, p. 145.

O'Connell now found himself strong enough to declare his pleasure as to the legislation which should take place in regard to his cause; and he even dared a schism in the Catholic body. The English Catholics parted off from the Irish on the question of Securities. They were willing to negotiate with government on the subject of Securities: O'Connell scorned them, feeling, as he said, that it was better to receive a part of the Catholic claims, without being fettered with Securities, and in full certainty that the rest of the demand must soon be granted, than to receive political equality on terms which might occasion future difficulty. He would not entertain the “paltry question of political discount;” he would have full emancipation: either at once or by instalments; but he would give nothing in return for clear political rights. But on no subject were his asseverations so emphatic as on that of the disfranchisement of “the Forties.” He well knew that his former agreement to sacrifice the Forties had never been forgotten; and he now doubled and

Forty Shilling
Freeholders.

1828.

redoubled his protestations, given in the strongest terms the language affords, that he would never permit their franchise to be touched. On the 16th of December, the Association unanimously passed a resolution, "That they would deem any attempt to deprive the forty-shilling freeholders of their franchise, a direct violation of the constitution." Mr. O'Connell "would rather die" than yield that franchise:—"would say that if any man dared to bring in a bill for the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, the people ought to rebel, if they cannot otherwise succeed." Again: "Sooner than give up the forty-shilling freeholders, I would rather go back to the Penal Code. They form part of the Constitution: their right is as sacred as that of the king to his throne; and it would be treason against the people to attempt to disfranchise them. . . . I would conceive it just to resist that attempt with force: and in such resistance I would be ready to perish in the field, or on the scaffold." So said O'Connell up to the end of the year. As for Mr. Shiel, he said, in anticipating the policy of the Duke of Wellington, "I trust he will not pursue this course: but if he should, I tell him, we would rather submit for ever to the pressure of the parricidal code, which crushed our fathers to the grave, than assent to this robbery of a generous peasantry." These declarations were made in public, at the Clare election, and at the meetings of the Association, and printed in the newspapers, at a time when all men's ears were open, and every word of the Catholic leaders echoed from end to end of the empire: and by them the leaders must be judged.

During these important months, nothing seems to have been seen and heard of the Irish government, till, on the 1st of October, it issued a proclamation against such assemblages as had already been put down by the influence of the Association. All was again still and mute till a strange incident, which occurred in the last month of the year, fixed attention on the two friends,—the Duke of Wellington and the Marquess of Anglesey, who governed England and Ireland.

Dr. Curtis, the titular Catholic Primate of Ireland, had been intimate with the Duke of Wellington ever since the Peninsular War, when Dr. Curtis held a high office in the University of Salamanca, and was able to render important services to the British army. The Catholic Primate wrote to the Premier on the state of Ireland on the 4th of December of this year: and on the 11th the Duke wrote in reply,—as friend to friend, and without any idea of a political use being made of what he said. There was nothing in the letter which would have fixed attention, if it had been from any other man; and it now appears natural and reasonable enough, and little or nothing more than he had said in Parliament half a year before. He reciprocates his correspondent's desire to see the question settled:—sees no prospect of it;—laments the existing party-spirit and violence; thinks, if men could bury the subject in oblivion for a short time, during which difficulties might be pondered—(a curious method, by the way, of burying the subject in oblivion)—"it might be possible to discover a satisfactory remedy."

A copy of this letter was presently in Mr. O'Connell's hands. Mr. O'Connell carried it to the Association, and read it aloud:—the Association received it with cheers, and recorded it on their minutes, as a decisive declaration of the Prime Minister in favour of Catholic Emancipation. This was not per-

THE VICE-ROY.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 148.

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haps, so audacious a stretch of interpretation as some persons,—probably including the writer of the letter himself,—supposed: for the impediments were now clearly only external and circumstantial; and the Association might reasonably feel equal to the conquest of all such.—Meantime, Dr. Curtis had replied to the Duke, in a long letter in which he set forth his reasons for thinking that the burying the subject in oblivion was wholly out of the question; and that every attempt to get rid of it would be extremely dangerous.—He sent copies of the Duke's letter and his own reply to the Lord Lieutenant: and the Lord Lieutenant in return explained his own view to be that the Catholic agitation should be continued. No doubt, this was not intended in contradiction or opposition to the Premier; but under the idea that the Catholic agitation was the surest means of overpowering the difficulties which embarrassed the Premier, and thus of aiding the government. Its effect however was strange, from its appearance of being in direct opposition to the views of the head of the government. Not less strange was the following sentence of Lord Anglesey's reply. "Your letter gives me information on a subject of the highest interest. I did not know the precise sentiments of the Duke of Wellington upon the present state of the Catholic question." What were men to think of this? They must conclude one of two things,—both highly injurious to government:—either that there was such indifference about the Catholics as that their cause had not been discussed with the Lord Lieutenant among other subjects of Irish policy;—or that the Lord Lieutenant was not in the confidence of government at home. It was impossible not to entertain the last of these suppositions; especially as the Viceroy proceeds to say that he must acknowledge his disappointment at finding—(still from the Duke's letter merely)—that there was no prospect of Catholic Emancipation being effected during the approaching session of parliament. This was on the 23rd of December;—only six weeks before the opening of the Session. These are curious disclosures of the way in which one of the most important events in British History, and in the History of Civil and Religious Liberty everywhere, was first awaited and then brought to pass.

This letter too was immediately carried to the Catholic Association, and read aloud amidst plaudits, like the other. In this case, the applause was natural enough; for the letter recommended a strenuous pushing of the Catholic cause, by peaceable means:—"the question should not be for a moment lost sight of:" but "let the Catholic trust to the justice of his cause," and use none but unexceptionable means, that his plea might "be met by the parliament under the most favourable circumstances." Such encouragement from the ruler of Ireland and a Privy Councillor of the King, might well be received with cheers. A large tribute of admiration was voted to him for his "manliness and political sagacity." His sagacity seems to have failed him in regard to his own interests, however;—his reputation for prudence and even political honour. If he was surprised, no one else was when the next English packet brought his recall. He left Ireland in January, and was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by the Duke of Northumberland.

RECALL OF THE
VICEROY.
Annual Register,
1828, p. 151.

ASPECT OF THE
QUESTION.

One cannot but see some comic intermixture with the very serious aspect of the times, at the close of 1828. There were the Duke of Wellington and the Marquess of Anglesey made the two pets of the Catholic Association,—their

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letters treasured in the Minutes, and themselves assumed to be both friends of Catholic objects; while, at the same time, and in consequence of these very proceedings, the Duke was recalling the Marquess, because the Marquess had brought the Duke into an irremediable difficulty. The Catholic Association was pledging itself to send seventy county members into the House, while its very existence was for the purpose of obtaining an admission to Parliament at all. While the Catholic leaders were assuming that they should have all they wanted very soon, and the Brunswick Clubmen were certain that they would never obtain anything at all, as long as there were true Britons who would make their dead bodies a barrier between the Catholics and the privileges of Protestantism, the English Tories, through the mouth of Lord Eldon, lamented that "bit by bit," emancipation would be granted; and the Liberals were certain that the Duke meant to yield everything in the course of the next session; while the Duke himself certainly was not aware in the middle of the closing month of the year, that he meant anything at all. He might appropriate the saying of the sage,—“All I know is, that I know nothing.”

Mr. Shiel has left us a picture of the time, in a speech at the Association: “The Minister folds his arms as if he were a mere indifferent observer, and the terrific contest only afforded him a spectacle for the amusement of his official leisure. He sits as if two gladiators were crossing their swords for his recreation. The Cabinet seems to be little better than a box in an amphitheatre, from whence his Majesty’s Ministers may survey the business of blood.” The Viceroy was recalled, for desiring and promoting what the head of the government was about to do.—As for the great Catholic leader, the most noticeable particular about him was his having pledged himself to perdition if ever again he would compromise the franchise of “the Forties.”—Times seem to have become too hard for men’s wits;—for their endowments of sagacity and judgment, and that of prudence which, in affairs so momentous as this, should go by the name of conscience.

CHAPTER VI.

1828.

CLOSE OF THE
SESSION OF 1828.

IN the Speech with which the King, by commission, dismissed parliament on the 28th of July, the first point of interest was a declaration of the reviving prosperity of the people. After the dreadful shocks of 1825 and 1826, it was some time before any revival of trade was apparent, at all adequate to the wants of the working classes. But now the immense stocks of every species of manufacture which had been prepared under the mania of speculation were pretty well cleared off; money and commodities had resumed an ascertained and natural value; and the state of the Revenue and the general contentment indicated that a condition of prosperity had returned. One advantage of this was that many statesmen, and whole classes of "interests," became convinced that free-trade (as the very partial relaxations of former commercial restriction were then called), was not the cause of the late distresses,—was certainly enhancing the prosperity,—was, in short, found to be a very good thing.

The King's Speech carefully indicated that the war which had been declared between Russia and the Porte was wholly unconnected with the Treaty of London; and promised to continue the efforts which had been made, in concert with the King of France, to promote peace between Russia and Turkey. Meantime, the emperor had been induced not to carry war into the Mediterranean, where so many interests were involved; and had actually recalled his warlike instructions to the commanders of his fleet in the Levant.

AFFAIRS OF POR-
TUGAL.

It was announced that great disappointment had occurred with regard to Portugal; and that it had been found necessary by all the Powers of Europe to withdraw their representatives from Lisbon.

The mistake with regard to Portugal had been in ever appointing as Regent such a man as Don Miguel. It might be evident enough that difficulties would be reconciled, and the future would be provided for by uniting the interests of the different branches of the royal family in his regency, and his marriage with the yet childish Queen: but all political arrangements proceed on the supposition that more or less reliance is to be placed on the acting parties,—that some obligations of conscience, or at least of reputation, exist in each party that enters into a contract. But the conduct of Don Miguel in regard to his father, and in other instances, had shown him to be, not only untrustworthy, but a sort of moral monster who cannot be treated with as men usually are. Yet his brother, the Emperor of Brazil, thought he had arranged everything, and settled adverse claims by appointing him Regent of Portugal, and promising him marriage with the young Queen.

DON MIGUEL IN
ENGLAND.

At the beginning of this year, Don Miguel had been in England. He spent nearly two months in London; and it was regarded as a good sign that he went there, and associated with the rulers and statesmen of a free country, rather than visit the courts of despotic sovereigns. He had taken the oath to

preserve the new Constitution of Portugal, and had written to his sister,—his predecessor in the regency,—from Vienna, that he was determined to maintain inviolate the laws of the kingdom, and the institutions legally granted by Don Pedro, and to cause them to be observed, and by them to govern the kingdom. And before he left England he had, according to the universal belief, written a letter, voluntarily, to George IV., in which he said that “if he overthrew the constitution, he should be a wretch, a breaker of his oath, and an usurper of his brother’s throne.” There was never any question of his being bound by the strongest obligations to administer constitutional government in Portugal, if he had been one who could be bound by any obligations whatever. But, as it was proved that he was not such an one, he should not have been trusted with any political powers whatever.

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Annual Register,
1828, p. 178.

The Princess Regent took leave of the Cortes in January; and on the 22nd of February, Don Miguel landed at Lisbon. Among the acclamations which greeted him,—the cries of “Long live the Infant!”—a few voices were heard shouting “Long live Don Miguel, the absolute king!” Neither on this occasion, nor when he went in procession to the cathedral, and heard more of the same shouts, did the Prince take any notice of them. They passed as the cries of a few discontented men among the rabble; and it was never clear whether Don Miguel had at this time any intention of usurping the throne, or whether he was afterwards instigated to it by his mother. From the moment when he fell on his knees before his mother, he showed himself her slave, and wrought out her wicked pleasure most zealously, whatever might have been his previous intentions.—He was to swear to the Constitution, four days after his arrival, in the presence of the two Chambers, and of the Court. There was something strange about the ceremony which excited the suspicions of the bystanders. The Prince was ill at ease, hurried, and confused; and he spoke too low to be heard by those nearest to him. The Archbishop of Lisbon, who administered the oath, stood directly in front of the Prince with his priestly garments spread wide, so that the Regent was little better seen than heard. He is declared not to have touched the book of the gospels, and to have said when the show was over, “Well, I have gone through the ceremony of swearing to the Charter; but I have sworn nothing.” One significant circumstance is that there was no register, or legal record of any kind, of the event. The next day, the new ministry was announced: and the announcement spread dismay among the constitutionalists. The funds fell; the Bank, which was to have set off on a new score that day, feared a run, and postponed its payments indefinitely: all business was at a stand in Lisbon. The mob assembled under the windows of the Queen-Mother, shouting for absolutism; and the Prime Minister distributed money among them. During the month of March, the proceedings of the Regent were so open and shameless in insulting and displacing Liberals and favouring the Absolutists, that many hundreds of the best families in Lisbon left the capital. Just at this time, the British troops sent by Mr. Canning were embarking for their return; and a large amount of money,—a loan from M. Rothschild to the Prince,—was arriving. The new British ambassador at Lisbon, Sir Frederick Lamb, decided, on his own responsibility, to detain the troops, and send the money back to London,—that the usurper (for it was now no secret that the Prince was about to assume the title of

Annuaire His-
torique, 1828, p.
516.
His USURPATION.

Annuaire His-
torique, 1828, p.
525.

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King) might be awed by the presence of British troops, and unaided in his treasonable purposes by British gold. This was in the middle of March; and it was the beginning of April before the British Ambassador could receive instructions how to proceed.

On the 14th of March the Prince dissolved the Chambers, to evade the passing of a vote of thanks to the British commanders, and some troublesome inquiries into state abuses. On the 2nd of April the British troops were embarked for home, in pursuance of orders received by the Ambassador. Before this, the Prince had been declared in several provincial towns to be absolute King, Don Miguel I. When the British troops were gone, and with them all the respectable liberals who could get away, there was no further impediment to the proclamation taking place in the capital: and the thing was done on the birthday of the Queen-Mother, on the 25th of April. The scene was opened by the Commandant of Police with his guard, before the Hall of the Municipality, between eight and nine in the morning. Baring their heads, and drawing their sabres, they cried aloud, "Long live Don Miguel the First! Long live the Empress-Mother!" Thereupon the national flag was slung up on the roof of the hall, and the municipal authorities appeared in the balcony, to proclaim the new King. The proclamation was repeated at noon through the city; and all citizens were invited to sign a memorial, imploring Don Miguel to assume the function of King. This memorial was presented in the evening; but the paucity and doubtful character of the signatures (according to some authorities) annoyed and alarmed the Prince. According to others, the signatures were wonderfully numerous; but the Prince dared not proceed to extremities at once, because all the foreign ambassadors had notified that they should leave Lisbon immediately on his assumption of the title of king. He desired the memorialists to wait, and see what he would do.

Annual Register,
1828, p. 193
Annuaire Histo-
rique, 1828, p. 534.

A note was sent round the next morning from the Foreign Minister to these representatives, regretting the popular manifestation of the previous day, and assuring them that everything possible had been done by government to keep the people quiet. The foreign ambassadors met to confer upon their reply; and they agreed upon a notification to the minister that they suspended all official intercourse with the government till they should receive fresh instructions from their respective courts.

All disguise was soon thrown off. On the 3rd of May, Don Miguel issued a summons to the ancient three estates of the kingdom, who had not been assembled for upwards of a hundred and thirty years. They were to meet to "recognise the application of grave points of Portuguese right," since the importunate demand of various bodies in the state that the Prince would assume empire, had become very perplexing to him. The difficulty was how to sign this document. The awkwardness of signing in Don Pedro's name an invitation to declare that Don Pedro had no rights in Portugal, was so great, that the Prince actually signed it as Don Miguel the First. As king, he summoned the estates who were to meet to invite him to become king.

The estates met on the 26th of June, and immediately declared Don Miguel to be lawfully King of Portugal. On the 28th, the new sovereign assumed his full name and title. He had not been left in peace and quiet in the

interval. Oporto and other towns had risen against him; and many of the Portuguese refugees in England had returned to conduct the war. But they were delayed on the voyage; affairs had been mismanaged; and there was nothing left for them to do but to make the best retreat they could through Spain.

Of course, the ambassadors all took their departure at the end of June. At first the usurper did not conceal his rage and mortification; but presently he gave out declarations that they had all been recalled by his express desire, in order to be succeeded by others less addicted to freemasonry (his word, and that of other despots, for liberalism). From this time the course of the usurper became altogether disgusting. His practices could only be (where it was possible) denied by his flatterers: nobody vindicated them. He filled the prisons; set aside the laws, in order to procure the sacrifice of his enemies; confiscated all the property he could lay hands on; and spread such ruin, that, with all his devices, he could not raise money enough for his purposes. He actually asked for a loyal subscription; and the names of the donors, advertised in the Lisbon Gazette, looked grand in regard to rank and title; but the sum produced was only £4,000.

Don Pedro, mean time, had heard of his brother's dutiful acceptance of the charge of the regency, and of his being in London, where the Brazilian Emperor hoped he would learn some good lessons. Believing that the time was now come for his final surrender of all authority in Portugal, the Emperor prepared his concluding act of abdication on the 3rd of March. He little dreamed what his unworthy brother was doing, or he would not have yielded up his powers at such a time: and much less would he have sent his young daughter to Europe. As for the manifesto of abdication, the Brazilian Ministers at Vienna and London assumed the responsibility of keeping it back, and preventing its being officially communicated to any of the European powers. When the bad news from Portugal reached the Emperor, he issued a decree, (on the 25th of July), reprobating the acts of the usurping government, but treating his brother with a leniency which appeared strange; but which may perhaps be accounted for on the supposition that he had fears for his daughter, and might be uncertain about her probable fate. He spoke of Don Miguel as doubtless a captive and a victim in the hands of a party who compelled him to acts abhorrent to his nature. The government newspapers at Lisbon retorted by assuring the world that Don Pedro could not have prepared such a decree, except under the influence of "the horrid sect of Freemasons, who are the enemies of the throne and the altar."

The little Queen, Donna Maria, now nine years old, arrived at Gibraltar on the 2nd of September, on her way to Genoa, where she was to land, and proceed to Vienna, on a visit to her grandfather, the Emperor of Austria. The news which her conductors heard at Gibraltar, however, put them also upon considering their responsibilities; and they decided,—as so many had before done, to the high honour of our country,—that England was the safest retreat for a sufferer under political adversity. One of the frigates was immediately sent back to Brazil with the latest news of what had occurred; and the other brought Donna Maria to England. She arrived off Falmouth on the 24th of September. She was received with royal honours; and there was something very affecting in the sight of the eagerness with which the noble Portuguese

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Annual Register,
1828, p. 201.QUEEN OF POR-
TUGAL.Annuaire Histo-
rique, 1828, p. 568.ARRIVES IN
ENGLAND.

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refugees rushed on board, to devote themselves to her and the vindication of her rights. If she was too young to be duly touched with a sense of her situation, others felt it for her. He who had sworn to govern for her with fidelity during her tender years, had usurped her throne:—he who was to have been her husband, had repelled her from the shores of her own kingdom, and cast her upon the mercy of the world. No wonder the refugees rushed to her feet; for every heart in England bled for her.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 126.

When the frigate arrived at Falmouth, the Queen and her conductors were uncertain whether she would be received as Duchess of Oporto or as a sovereign. Everything hung now on a few moments. But all was well. The royal salute came thundering over the waters from the forts and the ships, and up went the flags on every hand. Then up went the royal standard of Portugal, and the young girl and her retinue knew that she was acknowledged Queen by Great Britain. On her way to London, she was greeted with addresses by the corporations of all the principal towns she passed through, and the people everywhere received her with cheers. In London, almost before the Portuguese residents could pay their duty to their sovereign, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary arrived to welcome her Majesty to our metropolis. They came in their state-carriages, in military uniform, and covered with orders. The King sent messages. He was at his cottage at Windsor, living in almost utter seclusion, and, as his people now began to be aware, in feeble and declining health.—On the 12th of October, the birthday of Don Pedro, an affecting ceremony took place at the residence of the Marquess Palmella. The whole of the Portuguese and Brazilian legations being present, and the Brazilian and Portuguese Ministers at the Courts of Vienna and the Netherlands, the Marquess Palmella told the whole story of Don Pedro's conduct, and the young Queen's position, read the decrees, and the Emperor's despatches, and, in short, put his hearers in possession of the entire case, in a discourse of three-quarters of an hour. The Marquess then, as the intended Prime Minister of the Queen, first took the oath of fealty to her; and his example was followed by all present; ambassadors, generals, peers of the realm, members of the Cortes, and military and political officers of various ranks,—in all, above two hundred. She had thus a little court about her while she remained in England; which was till the next year, when her father recalled her to Brazil. By that time it was explained that, while Great Britain acknowledged her sovereignty, discountenanced her usurping uncle, and desired to extend all due hospitality towards her, it was not possible to do more. Our treaties of alliance with Portugal, it was declared, bound us to aid her against foreign aggression, but not to interfere in her domestic struggles. We had sent troops to Portugal when Spain was invading her liberties: but we could not impose or depose her rulers.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 138.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 178.
DEATH OF LORD
LIVERPOOL.

Towards the close of the year, on the 15th of December, the funeral train at last left the door of Lord Liverpool's abode at Wimbledon. Of those who had hourly looked for his death nearly two years before, and who had held the affairs of the country suspended in expectation of it, some had long been in their graves. He was now released at last; and his funeral train was a long one; for his private life had won for him a gratitude and warm regard, which made him now more thought of as the kindly-hearted man than as the respectable Minister, who had ostensibly governed the country for fifteen years.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE never was an instance in which men were more universally blamed than the Wellington administration were at the time of the removal of the Catholic disabilities. The public always will and must judge by what they know; and those who knew only what was on the face of things, could not but form an unfavourable judgment, in every light, of the conduct of the Duke and his colleagues. Their own party, of course, thought them faithless, infirm, and cowardly. The fact was before all eyes that they had suddenly relinquished the declared principles, and stultified the professions of their whole political lives, deceived and deserted their friends and supporters, and offered to history a flagrant instance of political apostacy. The Opposition complained, with equal appearance of reason, that, after having thwarted, in every possible way, the efforts of Mr. Canning and the other friends of the Catholics, they shamelessly carried the measures which they would not hear of from Mr. Canning: that, having damaged the liberal statesmen of their day with all their influence, they stepped in at last to do the work which had been laboriously prepared in spite of them, and took the credit of it. Truly, their credit was but little with even those who put the best construction upon their conduct. By such, they were believed to have yielded to an overwhelming necessity; and thus to deserve no praise at all: while there was much that was inexplicable and unsatisfactory in their method of proceeding. There was evidence, that up to the middle of December, the Prime Minister did not intend to remove the Catholic disabilities, or that he chose the public to suppose it: while on the 5th of February, the Speech from the Throne recommended their removal. Time, however, clears up many things. The conduct of the Ministers was inexplicable; for their difficulties were of a nature which they could not explain. They explained as much as men of honour and loyalty in their position could;—the necessity which existed for what they were doing: but about every thing which most closely concerned themselves, every thing which was necessary to clear their political character, they were compelled to keep silence. By others, however, bit by bit, and in a course of nearly twenty years, disclosures have been made which appear to put us in full possession of their case, and leave us with the conviction that their fault lay in their preceding political course, and not in their conduct at this juncture. Their anti-Catholic principles and policy had been mistaken, as the liberal party had, of course, always declared. There was nothing new in that. And a close study of the facts of their case, as now known, seems to lead to their acquittal of all blame in the great transactions of 1829.

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DIFFICULTIES IN
THE CABINET.

The difficulty which embarrassed them, and compromised their reputation, THE KING. was in regard to the King. Lord Eldon, and others, who saw him from time to time, had been struck by the change in his health in 1827, from which

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period he continued to decline. By his mode of living, he had never given himself a chance for health: and when the health breaks up under such circumstances, there can hardly be any serenity of temper or tranquillity of mind. He was at this time truly wretched; and he made everybody about him miserable. He vacillated between despondency and levity, irascibility and weak fondness; and, worst of all, not the slightest dependence was to be placed upon his word. In unreliableness he was a match for O'Connell himself. There is usually a tacit understanding among us in favour of Ministers where any difficulty with the sovereign is supposed to exist. It was so in the case of the hovering insanity of George III.; and there have been times since when a generous aid has been afforded by Opposition in parliament to a Minister who might be supposed to be under embarrassments which a loyal subject and servant of the Crown could not explain, or in any way indicate. But during the crisis under our notice, no one could imagine the difficulties the administration were under with the King; and the extreme seclusion in which the King shut himself up gave them no chance of his so exposing himself to any eyes but their own as to obtain for them the allowance which their position required. It is all known now; or, at least, so much is revealed as amply to vindicate the honour of the Wellington administration.

Annual Register,
1829, p. 89.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 83.

On the 28th of September, 1828, the Duke of Wellington had written to the Viceroy of Ireland, that the Catholic question was "a subject of which the King never hears or speaks without his mind being disturbed." On the 11th of November, again he wrote, "I cannot express to you adequately the extent of the difficulties which these and other occurrences in Ireland create, in all discussions with his Majesty." We have already seen evidence that up to the middle of December, the ministers had no idea that anything could be done towards conciliating the Catholics. The King's own account of what happened next was this,—given to Lord Eldon in conversation on the 28th of the next March: "That at the time the Administration was formed, no reason was given him to suppose that any measures for the relief of the Roman Catholics were intended or thought of by Ministers; that he had frequently himself suggested the absolute necessity of putting down the Roman Catholic Association—of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, to destroy the powers of the most seditious and rebellious proceedings of the members of it, and particularly at the time that Lawless made his march:—that instead of following what he had so strongly recommended, after some time, not a very long time before the present session, he was applied to to allow his Ministers to propose to him, as an united Cabinet, the opening of parliament by sending such a message as his speech contained:—that, after much struggling against it, and after the measure had been pressed upon him as an absolute necessity, he had consented that the Protestant members of his Cabinet, if they could so persuade themselves to act, might join in such a representation to him, but that he would not then, nor in his recommendation to parliament, pledge himself to anything. He repeatedly mentioned that he represented to his Ministers, the infinite pain it gave him to consent even so far as that."

It was foolish to talk of refusing to pledge himself to anything, while permitting his Ministers to request from him a message to parliament which he contemplated granting. In consenting to receive the proposed representation

of his Ministers, he pledged himself to their policy : and he must have known at the time that he did so, though in his anger and wretchedness afterwards he endeavoured to persuade himself and Lord Eldon that he had kept open a way of escape. Meantime, the case of his Ministers was a hard one. Having once obtained the King's consent to bring forward a measure in relief of the Catholics, they should have had every encouragement and assistance from him. But he led them a terrible life at present, when they had quite enough to bear from other quarters, and when they were so completely committed that nothing could be gained by making them miserable.

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When February came in, the best informed politicians began whispering to each other that the King's Speech, which was to be read on the 5th, would contain large concessions to the Catholics. On the 4th, at the dinners held as usual at the houses of the two leaders of government in parliament, the Speech was read, and found to contain all that had been rumoured, and more. After an allusion to the disorders in Ireland caused by the Catholic Association, and expressions of a determination to put them down, followed the recommendation of the King to Parliament to consider whether the civil disabilities of the Catholics could not be removed "consistently with the full and permanent security of our establishments in Church and State."—On the same day, Mr. Peel addressed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, offering to resign his seat for the University, because he believed that his resistance to the Catholic claims had been one of the main grounds upon which the confidence of his constituents in him had been founded ; and he could now resist those claims no longer, but, on the contrary, found himself impelled, for the peace of his country, to advise the King to propose a settlement of the question. What Mr. Canning had foregone, Mr. Peel now resigned,—the honour and the trust which he valued above all others.

MR PEEL'S RESIGNATION OF HIS SEAT.

Mr. Peel's resignation was accepted ; and the new election soon took place. There was an intention on the part of the anti-Catholic members of the University, to bring forward Lord Encombe, the grandson of Lord Eldon, who consented to the nomination : but it was found that Mr. Peel was so strongly supported that it would be necessary to oppose to him a candidate of graver years and greater weight than the youthful Lord Encombe : and Sir Robert H. Inglis was the choice of the University. The contest was eager and close. During the three days that it lasted, 1364 voters polled ; and the majority by which Sir Robert H. Inglis won his seat was only 146.—Mr. Peel was returned for the borough of Westbury, in time to assume the management of the Catholic Relief Bill in the Commons.

No division took place in either House on the Address in answer to the Royal Speech, which was, as usual now, delivered by Commission. The King appeared averse to meeting his parliament, or seeing any one else whom he could avoid : and the present occasion was one the least likely to draw him forth from his retirement, though the sanction of his presence would at this time have been especially valuable to his Ministers. The Prime Minister expressed his desire that no discussion of the Catholic Question should take place till the measure should be brought forward ; explaining that the measure would be proposed in a substantial shape, without going through a Committee ; that its purport would be a removal of all the civil disabilities of the Catholics, with a few special

SPEECH AND ADDRESS.

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CATHOLIC ASSO-
CIATION DIS-
SOLVED.

exceptions; and that it would be accompanied by provisions rendered necessary by the removal of the disabilities.

Before the subject could be entered upon, it was essential to procure the dissolution of the Catholic Association. The preceding Acts passed for the purpose had failed; and the difficulty was great of framing a law which could not be evaded as they had been. The present Act was limited as to time, being proposed for only one year; and the penalties were not severe; but it gave large powers to the Viceroy of Ireland. It was not opposed by the friends of the Catholics, who took it as a part of a series of measures, and were well aware that there would be no need to put it in force. And its powers were never put to the proof; for the Association dissolved itself before the bill became law. The bill was brought forward by Mr. Peel in the Commons on the 10th of February; and it passed the Lords on the 24th of the same month. Already, the Association existed no longer: and the Houses and the country were at liberty to go on with the great question of all.

Hansard, xx. 177,
519.CATHOLIC RELIEF
BILL.
Hansard, xx. 727.

On the 5th of March, Mr. Peel brought forward the measure for the relief of the Catholics. The tables of both Houses had been loaded with petitions for and against the bill, from the first possible day after its announcement. The strength of the anti-Catholic party, as shown in petitions, was great; but in the House of Commons it was not so. The same reasons which had caused the conversion of the administration caused that of their adherents generally; and the power of argument was all on one side.

Hansard, xx.
760-3.

The Bill proposed an Oath, in the place of the Oath of Supremacy, by which a Catholic entering parliament bound himself to support the existing institutions of the State, and not to injure those of the Church. It admitted Catholics to all corporate offices, and the enjoyment of all municipal advantages; and to the administration of civil and criminal justice. The army and navy were open to them before. The only exclusions were from the offices of Regent, of Lord Chancellor of England and Ireland, and of Viceroy of Ireland. From all offices connected with the Church, its Universities and schools, and from all disposal of Church patronage, they were of course excluded. Such were the grants and exclusions. As for the securities and restrictions proposed, the most important related to the franchise; and of these, the chief was the substitution of a ten-pound for a forty-shilling qualification, in Ireland. The government refused to interfere, in one way or another, with the Roman Catholic religion, but were willing to leave it on the footing of dissent, neither proposing on the one hand, to endow the clergy, nor, on the other, to pry into its relations with Rome: but the bill forbade the display of the insignia of office in any place of worship but those of the Established Church: the use of episcopal titles and names by Roman Catholic clergy; the extension of monachism within the empire; and the introduction of more Jesuits than were already in the country (and who were henceforth to be subject to registration). Such were the securities and restrictions.

Hansard, xx.
764-777.

Mr. Peel's speech lasted four hours, during which time the House was alternately in a state of profound stillness and echoing with cheers. At times, the cheers were so loud as to be heard in Westminster Hall. The occasion united in itself two very strong interests,—that which related to the settlement of the Catholic Question, and that which regarded the principles and

conduct of the leading statesmen of the time. In both directions, the speech was eminently satisfactory. The Catholic question might be considered as settled as the exposition of the measure fell from the lips of the speaker : and in regard to the political character of Mr Peel,—the most important man in the country at that time and to this day,—the case was clear to the eyes of the impartial and philosophical observer ; and all subsequent events have been but illustrations of what was that night revealed. Mr. Canning was wont to say that Mr. Peel was his rightful successor in statesmanship ; and so he has proved himself : but the method of his procedure has been as different from that of Canning as the nature of the man. Each has been an inestimable blessing to his country in a singular and perilous period of transition,—the one in spite of the drawbacks which attend upon all human agency ; the other apparently in consequence of them. Mr. Canning had a glorious apprehension of the principles of freedom, clouded and intercepted by prejudices full of insolence and perverseness. He toiled and made sacrifices for the relief of the Catholics, and used all the influence of his office and his character for the promotion of political liberty abroad, but he opposed Parliamentary Reform and the relief of the Dissenters. Mr. Peel appears never to have had, in his youth and early manhood, any conception of popular freedom at all. What he has is the result of a political experience which has emancipated him from the misfortunes of his early political training and connections. If any man could be said to have been born into a condition of political opinion, it was he. He was born into conservatism, and reared in it, and stationed to watch over and preserve it : and herein lies the misfortune which probably alone has prevented his taking rank as a first-rate statesman. But that which is his personal misfortune has been, in the opinion of many of the wise, the saving of our country from revolution in an age of revolutions. He has been our bridge over the abyss in which the State might, ere this, have been lost. A statesman, who, setting out on his course without high and definite aims, finds his principles by the wayside as he proceeds, can never be the highest of his order, however faithful and courageous he may be in the application of the truths which he has appropriated : but, in the absence of the loftiest statesmanship which can be conceived of, and which no reasonable nation expects at any given time to enjoy, the greatest blessing which can be desired is that of a statesman who can understand and guide the time ; that guiding—that leading on—supposing him ahead of the average wisdom of his generation.

And this is what Mr. Peel has been to his country from the day of his bringing in the Catholic Relief Bill. He was not then what he has since proved himself capable of being : but his explanation on that day showed to sagacious observers precisely what he was, and what he might be expected to become. At that time he was sorry that changes on behalf of liberalism were required. It would have pleased him better to have been able to go on in the old ways which he believed to be safer for rulers, and happier for the people, than the new methods which compelled their own adoption. But he saw the necessity : he saw that to preserve the peace of society, and to respect the convictions of the majority, was a higher duty than to rule according to his own predilections. It was an irksome and a humiliating duty ; but it was a clear one ; and he did it. He had much to bear from the rage and contempt

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of old connections, and from the jealousy and scorn of the Liberals who had hitherto been his opponents: but these visitations were penalties on his former and lower opinions,—on his previous false position, and not on his new enlightenment. The enlightenment was not yet great: but when once the clouds begin to part, there is no saying how much sunshine may be let down: a rent was made in the educational prejudice which had hitherto canopied his mind; and such rents are never closed. The cry at the time was, about this speech, in the market-places and by firesides, that it was not the speech of a great man; that it assumed a tone no higher than that of reluctant yielding to an irresistible necessity. And this was quite true. Such was the tone of the speech; and it was this very characteristic which gave hope to the wise that the speaker would become, or would prove himself, a great man hereafter. They liked the simple truth of the explanation better than any sudden assumption of a higher ground. There was honesty and heart enough in it to afford an expectation that he would soon attain a higher ground, while there was an assurance that he would not pretend to any other ground than that which he actually held. From that time his expansion and advancement have been very remarkable. His mind and heart have kindled with an enthusiasm of which he was, twenty years ago, supposed unsusceptible: an enthusiasm of popular sympathy, and in favour of a pervasive justice. The union of this liberal sympathy with former habits of political conduct has made him a statesman precisely adapted to his age;—to serve his country and his time, though not to reap the immediate rewards of popularity, or adequate gratitude. The mischief of his early false position has followed him throughout, and must ever follow him. Even such services as his, in themselves so unquestionable, have been received, up to the latest period, with a certain degree of mistrust: and this is right; not because the man deserves it,—for he has long shown that he merits, and from the most thoughtful he certainly enjoys, the fullest confidence that can be reposed in any man who has proved himself fallible in his vocation:—but because it is inevitable that a man who has once been in a false position must forego the unhesitating trust which is reposed in a man of equal qualifications, who has always recognised, taken, and held his own true position. We have not, however, any other man of equal qualifications. We cannot have one of a more unquestionable disinterestedness; and Mr. Peel stands pronounced, beyond all controversy, the greatest statesman of his age. To him we owe our rescue or exemption from the political calamities which perhaps no one else could have averted: and to him we are indebted for so many homely and substantial benefits of good government, and such brilliant renovations of our national resources, that it seems impossible for the national gratitude to overtake his deserts. If he was at first the victim, he has since shown himself the conqueror, of time and circumstance; and, for many years past, it has been clear to the unprejudiced that all fault-finding with Mr. Peel's character and political conduct, as a whole, resolves itself into a complaint that he was not made another sort of man than he is. This glance into the future, of whose events we have yet to treat, may be excused by the relation which that future bears to the occasion when Mr. Peel first stood up a reformer on any controverted party question. He was aware at the moment that he stood at the most critical point of his

political life : and after the lapse of twenty eventful years, it is impossible to say that he exaggerated, in the interest of the hour, its importance to himself, while he was perhaps further than some other people from being aware how serious was its significance in relation to the welfare of his country.

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The state of the question, and the position of the Ministry were briefly presented in the speech. "According to my heart and conscience," said Mr. Peel, "I believe that the time is come when less danger is to be apprehended to the general interests of the empire, and to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Protestant Establishment, in attempting to adjust the Catholic question, than in allowing it to remain any longer in its present state. . . . Looking back upon the past, surveying the present, and forejudging the prospects of the future, again I declare that the time has at length arrived when this question must be adjusted." "I have for years attempted to maintain the exclusion of Roman Catholics from parliament and the high offices of the State. I do not think it was an unnatural or unreasonable struggle. I resign it, in consequence of the conviction that it can be no longer advantageously maintained: from believing that there are not adequate materials, or sufficient instruments, for its effectual and permanent continuance. I yield therefore to a moral necessity which I cannot control, unwilling to push resistance to a point which might endanger the Establishments that I wish to defend." . . . "The outline of my argument is this. We are placed in a position in which we cannot remain. We cannot continue stationary. There is an evil in divided Cabinets and distracted councils which can be no longer tolerated. . . . Supposing this established, and supposing it conceded that an united government must be formed; in the next place I say that that government must choose one of two courses. They must advance or they must recede. They must grant further political privileges to the Roman Catholics, or they must retract those already given. They must remove the barriers that obstruct the continued flow of relaxation and indulgence, or they must roll back to its source the mighty current which has been let in upon us, year after year, by the gradual withdrawal of restraint. I am asked what new light has broken in upon me? why I see a necessity for concession now which was not evident before? I detailed, on a former occasion, that a dreadful commotion had distracted the public mind in Ireland—that a feverish agitation and unnatural excitement prevailed, to a degree scarcely credible, throughout the entire country. I attempted to show that social intercourse was poisoned there in its very springs—that family was divided against family, and man against his neighbour—that, in a word, the bonds of social life were almost dissevered—that the fountains of public justice were corrupted—that the spirit of discord walked openly abroad—and that an array of physical force was marshalled in defiance of all law, and to the imminent danger of the public peace. I ask, could this state of things be suffered to exist, and what course were we to pursue? Perhaps I shall be told, as I was on a former occasion, in forcible though familiar language, that this is the old story! that all this has been so for the last twenty years, and that therefore there is no reason for change. Why, this is the very reason for change. It is because the evil is not casual and temporary, but permanent and inveterate,—it is because the detail of misery and outrage is nothing but 'the old story' that I am contented to run the hazard of a change.

Hansard, xv.
729—732.

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We cannot determine upon remaining idle spectators of the discord and disturbance of Ireland. The universal voice of the country declares that something must be done. I am but echoing the sentiments of all reasonable men, when I repeat that something must be done. I wish however to take nothing for granted, but to found my argument, not upon general assent, but upon unquestionable facts. I ask you to go back to a remoter period than it is generally the habit to embrace in these discussions—I ask you to examine the state of his Majesty's government for the last thirty-five years, and to remark the bearing of the Catholic question upon that government—the divisions it has created among our statesmen—the distraction it has occasioned among our councils—and the weakness it has consequently produced. I ask you then to observe what has been the course of parliament for the same period. And lastly, what has been the consequence of the divisions in the councils of the King, and of disunion between the two Houses of Parliament—the practical consequences as to Ireland."

The narrative of these divisions is mournful enough, not only in its detail of the consequences to Ireland, but as proving how much evil men will cause and endure rather than surrender their prejudices and the power which they hold on the tenure of bigotry. In the time of Lord Liverpool, it appears that the prejudices had become scarcely tenable, and the power of tyranny very precarious. In 1825, Mr. Peel declared, "I stated to the Earl of Liverpool, who was then at the head of the Administration, that in consequence of the decision given against me in this House, it was my anxious wish to be relieved from office. It was however notified to me that my retirement would occasion the retirement of the Earl of Liverpool: and that such an event would at once produce a dissolution of the Administration, the responsibility of which would rest with me. . . . Lord Liverpool was then approaching the end of his career. I had entered public life under his auspices, and I shrank from the painful task of causing his retirement, and the dissolution of his Majesty's existing government. If I had acted simply in obedience to my own wishes, I would have resigned. I was induced, however, to retain office, and to ascertain the result of another appeal to the country, by a general election. In 1826, there was a new Parliament. In 1827, a majority in this House decided against the Catholic question. In 1828, however, the House took a different view of the matter, and though it did not pass a bill, it agreed to a resolution favourable to the principle of adjustment. That resolution being passed, I was again in the situation in which I had been placed in 1825, and I determined to retire from office. I intimated my fixed intention in this respect to the Duke of Wellington; but I felt it my duty to accompany that intimation with the declaration—not only that I would not, in a private capacity, any longer obstruct a settlement which appeared to me utterly inevitable, but that I would advise and promote it. Circumstances occurred, as I have already explained, under which I was appealed to to remain office; under which I was told, that my retirement from office must prevent the adoption of the course which I was disposed to recommend. I resolved, therefore, and without doubt or hesitation, not to abandon my post, but to take all the personal consequences of originating and enforcing, as a minister, the very measure which I had heretofore opposed.

In the other House, the explanations were as characteristic, and almost as interesting, as in the Commons. The Duke of Wellington apologized at the outset for being about to make a longer speech than their lordships were accustomed to hear from him: but he made shorter work of it than any other man would have done. It was in the course of this speech that he uttered the declaration which is, and will continue to be, more remembered than anything else he ever said. "I am one of those," said the great Captain, "who have probably passed a longer period of my life engaged in war than most men, and principally, I may say, in civil war; and I must say this,—that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I am attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it." In order to do this now,—in his absolute conviction that Ireland was on the verge of civil war, the hero of a hundred fights laid down what he cared for much more than his life. Having made up his mind to it, he did it well. His measure was thorough: the grace it gave was almost free: so nearly so, that the Opposition made a great laugh out of the securities and restrictions proposed. He said little in the way of personal excuse; and he got the thing done quickly. He would not listen to any plea for a dissolution of parliament,—to any remonstrance about not taking the sense of the country once more. The mass of anti-Catholic petitions showed him what might be the state of turmoil into which the country would be thrown by the question being referred to it: and the existing state of Ireland rendered the times too critical for such an experiment. The will of the Commons was plainly enough declared; and that was constitutional warrant sufficient for him to proceed upon: and, being resolved to carry the matter through, he granted no delay. The opposition in the Commons was swamped by the union of the liberal and the ministerial members: and the majority on the first division was 188 in a House of 508 members. This was on the motion for going into committee, on the 5th of March. On the 10th, the bill was brought in by Mr. Peel, and read a first time. The debate took place on the second reading, which was fixed for the 17th: and the majority the next night was 180 in favour of the bill. It issued from the committee on the 27th, not one of the many amendments proposed having been carried. There was more debating on the 30th, on occasion of the third reading, when the House did not adjourn till near four o'clock in the morning. The majority was 178 in a House of 462.

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THE DUKE OF
WELLINGTON.

Hansard, xxvi. 46.

Hansard, xx,
1290.Hansard, xx.
1638.

On the same evening, the Premier brought forward the bill in the Lords, had it read the first time, and fixed the second reading for two days afterwards, in the midst of great clamour about his precipitation. The debate lasted three nights, and issued in a majority of 105 in favour of the bill; the numbers being 217 for the second reading, and 112 against it. It was but nine months since this same House had decided by a majority of 45 against entertaining the question at all:—a proof how rapid and threatening had been the march of events in the meantime.—As in the Commons, all the amendments proposed were rejected; and on the 10th of April the bill passed, by a majority of 213 to 109.

Hansard, xxi. 391.

CATHOLIC RELIEF
BILL PASSED.
Hansard, xxi. 694.

It was not yet law, however; and there were some who did not even now give up all hope that the bill and the administration would perish together.

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England under
Seven Adminis-
trations, vol. i. p.
219.

THE KING'S VA-
CILLATION.

Life of Lord El-
don, iii. 82.

Life of Lord El-
don, iii. 83.

Of those who had struggled against the measure, Lord Eldon perhaps had toiled the hardest: and he had worked with a stout heart because he believed that he had private reasons for hoping that the King would overthrow the policy of his Ministers at the very last. "What a consistent career has Lord Eldon's been!" wrote a contemporary at this date; "the ever-active Principle of Evil in our political world! In the history of the universe no man has the praise of having effected so much good for his fellow-creatures as Lord Eldon has thwarted." As he thought this "the most dangerous measure that was ever brought before Parliament," and as he believed that it would inevitably occasion the destruction of the Church, the aristocracy, and the monarchy, it was natural that he should use every art of procrastination, and all possible emphasis of warning while the measure was in progress; and that he should record his protest, comprehending ten grounds of dissent, on the Journals when all other means of opposition were exhausted: but those who observed him were surprised that he appeared to forget his misery at the last. He looked cheerful, and indulged in jocularity: insomuch that Lord Holland taking up a proverb just quoted by Lord Eldon, said, that in opposition he had "come in like a lion, and gone out like a lamb." The secret of this was that Lord Eldon had been admitted by the King, and after two very long conversations, was not without hope that the sovereign would (as he called it) do his duty at last,—stand by the Constitution, and disappoint the Catholics. We have learned, by the bringing to light of Lord Eldon's private papers, much of what passed in these two interviews: and it is well for the truth of history, that we know thus much of what the Ministers had to struggle with in their dealings with a sovereign who, according to this record, was as unscrupulous with regard to truth, as he was weak and passionate.

The first interview took place on the 28th of March, two days before the Relief Bill left the Commons; and it lasted about four hours. The King seems to have opened by a statement so manifestly untrue, that Lord Eldon, who "refuted this allegation of the King's" in his private memorandum, must have seen how cautiously he ought to receive the complaints of the present Ministers which followed. "His Majesty employed a very considerable portion of time in stating all that he represented to have passed when Mr. Canning was made Minister, and expressly stated that Mr. Canning would never, and that he had engaged that he would never, allow him to be troubled about the Roman Catholic question. He blamed all the Ministers who had retired upon Canning's appointment: represented, in substance, that their retirement, and not he, had made Canning Minister. He excepted from this blame, in words, myself." This is as foolish as it is clearly false: but his Majesty was not, at this time, affirming "on the word of a king," but indulging in the fretfulness and helpless anger of a child; in which state men will sometimes, like passionate children, say anything that their passion suggests. And this helpless being was he whom his Ministers, weighed down by responsibility, had to call master, and to implicate in their work!

"He complained that he had never seen the bills,—that the condition of Ireland had not been taken into consideration,—that the Association Bill had been passed through both Houses before he had seen it,—that it was a very inefficient measure compared to those which he had in vain himself recom-

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mended,—that the other proposed measures gave him the greatest possible pain and uneasiness,—that he was in the state of a person with a pistol presented to his breast,—that he had nothing to fall back upon,—that his Ministers had threatened (I think he said twice, at the time of my seeing him) to resign, if the measures were not proceeded in, and that he had said to them ‘Go on,’ when he knew not how to relieve himself from the state in which he was placed:—and that in one of those meetings, when resignation was threatened, he was urged to the sort of consent he gave, by what passed in the interview between him and his Ministers, till the interview and the talk had brought him into such a state, that he hardly knew what he was about when he, after several hours, said ‘Go on.’—He then repeatedly expressed himself as in a state of the greatest misery, repeatedly saying ‘What can I do? I have nothing to fall back upon:’ and musing for some time, and then again repeating the same expression.”

It is clear that the King had given his Ministers his formal sanction to proceed, on their presenting the alternative of their resigning. It was mere childishness now to say that he was in such a state that he did not know what he was about: and it is astonishing that he could for a moment think of drawing back, or suppose that Lord Eldon could suggest or sanction such a retraction. This appears to be what he was aiming at throughout these two interviews: but, well as the old Tory would have liked to see the measure destroyed, he could not assume the responsibility of encouraging the King to withdraw his royal word.—The whole demeanour of the King appears to convey the impression that he thought his Ministers were doing something wilful and wanton in proposing relief to the Catholics. Throughout the two interviews, he speaks as if the Premier and Mr. Peel had taken it into their heads to gratify the Catholics, purely for the purpose of teasing their sovereign. He thinks and speaks of no one but himself; dwells only on his own annoyance, never even alluding to the state of the Catholics, or of the kingdom at large.

“After a great deal of time spent,” Lord Eldon’s account continues, “in which his Majesty was sometimes silent—apparently uneasy—occasionally stating his distress—the hard usage he had received—his wish to extricate himself—that he knew not what to look to—what to fall back upon—that he was miserable beyond what he could express: I asked him whether his Majesty, so frequently thus expressing himself, meant either to enjoin me, or to forbid me, considering or trying whether anything could be found or arranged, upon which he *could* fall back. He said, ‘*I neither enjoin you to do so, nor forbid you to do so*; but, for God’s sake, take care that I am not exposed to the humiliation of being again placed in such circumstances, that I must submit again to pray of my present Ministers that they will remain with me.’ He appeared to me to be exceedingly miserable, and intimated that he would see me again.”

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 84.

Within a fortnight after, on the 9th of April, the day before the Bill passed the Lords, the old Earl went again to the King, with more addresses. The interview lasted three hours; the first portion of the time being occupied with complaints and expressions of misery uttered in almost the same words as before. At length Lord Eldon spoke, and courageously. He reports:

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"I told him that his late Majesty, when he did not mean that a measure proposed to him should pass, expressed his determination in the most early stage of the business:—if it seemed to himself necessary to dissent, he asked no advice about dismissing his Ministers. He made that his own act—he trusted to what he had to hope for from his subjects, who could not leave him unsupported: that, on the other hand, there could not but be great difficulties in finding persons willing to embark in office, when matters had proceeded to the extent to which the present measure had been carried,—as was supposed, and had been *represented—after full explanation of them to his Majesty*,—and he had so far assented.—This led to his mentioning again what he had to say as to his assent. In the former interview it had been represented that, after much conversation *twice* with his Ministers, or such as had come down, he had said 'Go on,'—and upon the latter of *those two* occasions, after many hours' fatigue, and exhausted by the fatigue of conversation, he had said 'Go on.' He now produced *two papers*, which he represented as copies of what he had written to them, *in which he assents to their proceeding and going on with the bill*, adding certainly in each, as he read them, very strong expressions of the pain and misery the proceedings gave him. It struck me at the time, that I should, if I had been in office, have felt considerable difficulty about going on after reading such expressions; but whatever might be fair observation as to giving, or not, effect to those expressions, *I told his Majesty it was impossible to maintain that his assent had not been expressed*, or to cure the evils which were consequential, after the bill, in such circumstances, had been read a second time, and in the Lords' House, with a majority of 105. This led him to much conversation on that fact, that he had, he said, been deserted by an aristocracy that had supported his father—that, instead of 45 against the measure, there were twice that number of Peers for it—that every thing was revolutionary—every thing was tending to revolution,—and the Peers and the aristocracy were giving way to it. They (he said more than once or twice more) supported his father; but see what they had done to *him*. I took the liberty to say that I agreed that matters were tending rapidly to revolution But I thought it only just to some of the Peers who voted for the Bill to suppose that they had been led, or misled, to believe that his Majesty had agreed and consented to it.—He then began to talk about the Coronation Oath."—It was rather late to be taking that matter to heart, after all the years that had passed, during which he had let it be understood that he should not, in the matter of the Oath, follow the example of his father and the Duke of York. When this point was discussed, and it was settled that every man must do as he thinks right in taking any oath, without making any one else responsible,

"Little more passed—except occasional bursts of expression—'What can I do? What can I now fall back upon? What can I fall back upon? I am miserable, wretched, my situation is dreadful; nobody about me to advise with. If I do give my assent, I'll go to the baths abroad, and from thence to Hanover: I'll return no more to England—I'll make no Roman Catholic Peers—I will not do what this Bill will enable me to do—I'll return no more—let them get a Catholic King in Clarence.' I think he also mentioned Sussex. 'The people will see that I did not wish this.'—There were the

strongest appearances certainly of misery. He, more than once, stopped my leaving him. When the time came that I was to go, he threw his arms round my neck, and expressed great misery."

Though Lord Eldon told the King that it was impossible to draw back, he certainly entertained hopes that refusal, or at least delay, might yet be expected. He says, "I certainly thought, when I left him, that he would express great difficulty when the bill was proposed for the royal assent (great, but which would be overcome) about giving it. I fear that it seemed to be given as matter of course." It was with great horror that the old Earl heard the conclusion of the business. "(April 14th, 1829.) The fatal bills received the royal assent yesterday afternoon. After all I had heard in my visits, not a day's delay! God bless us, and His Church!"

What else could the helpless sovereign do, when even his friend, the late Chancellor, told him that he could not draw back? Delay could have done no good, and might have cost him dear. The only thing he could now do was to exhibit his temper towards his Ministers, and all friends of the Catholics. He particularly requested the attendance of Lord Eldon at his next levee; and he distinguished him by attentions which contrasted strongly with his coldness towards those who were "in the high places of office." This gracious reception, however, did not make Lord Eldon quite happy. "I was grieved," he says, "that my visit was a visit of duty to a sovereign whose supremacy is shared by that Italian priest, as Shakspeare calls the Pope. But I heard that he much wished it, and I understood that it would be a relief if I would go. . . . He is certainly very wretched about the late business. It is a pity he has not the comfort of being free from blame himself." The King's manner was observed, as he intended it should be. Two days afterwards, Lord Eldon writes, "The universal talk here is about the manner in which the King, at the levee, received the voters for the Catholics—most uncivilly—markedly so towards the Lords Spiritual, the Bishops who so voted,—and the civility with which he received the anti-Catholic voters, particularly the Bishops. It seems to be very general talk now, that his Ministers went much beyond what they should have said in Parliament, as to his consent to the measure. Consent, however, he certainly did; but with a language of reluctance, pain, and misery, which, if it had been represented, would have prevented a great deal of that ratting which carried the measure."

Such was the monarch in whose name the Ministers were compelled to act, and such the temper and conduct they had to bear with from him. Such was "the first gentleman in England,"—casting himself on the neck of his old adviser, bemoaning himself like a child, and indulging himself in persecuting the peers for their opinions, after having, by his message, demanded their opinions on Catholic Relief, and led the way. His gentlemanliness might be very striking to those who were in his presence: but it is not very conceivable to us now when we find it did not preserve him from agitation and passion, from such despotism as he could use, and from extreme personal rudeness. We hardly know which to wonder at most,—his rebellion against a necessity of which he could not have been ignorant, or his reputation for good manners.

On looking back to this time, nothing is more surprising than the quietness

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CATHOLIC RELIEF
BILL BECOMES
LAW.
Life of Lord Eldon, iii. p. 87.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 88.

IRISH FORTY-
SHILLING FREE-
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with which the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders took place. There were some few who saw and exposed the badness of the proceeding; but they were very few: and the very men who ought to have understood and been faithful to the principle of the case,—the very men who, in the same session, spoke and voted for Parliamentary Reform, helped to extinguish the political liberties of “the Forties.” Mr. Brougham regarded it as “the almost extravagant price of the inestimable good” which would arise from Catholic Emancipation. Sir J. Mackintosh declared it a tough morsel which he had found it hard to swallow. Lord Duncannon, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Huskisson, tried another method. They did what argument could do to obtain the inestimable good without paying the extravagant price which they did not conceive to be necessary. If they had been duly supported by all the friends of Parliamentary Reform, there is little doubt that the relief of the Catholics might have been obtained without the sacrifice of so vast an amount of political rights. But among the silent and idle was O’Connell, who threw overboard his beloved “Forties,” after pledging his life to destruction, and his soul to perdition, if he ever again slighted their liberties; and in a case where O’Connell so failed, we have little power of censure to spare for meaner offenders.

The two sides of the case were stated to be these. The Irish landlords had split up their estates into small properties for their own political purposes; and the long trains of adherents had followed their great man to the polling-booth, as obediently as sheep go to the water, till the recent period when the Forties were secured by O’Connell and the priests on behalf of the Catholic cause. The landlords would now have been glad to be able to undo their work, to consolidate these small properties, and get rid of the Forties. But this was a work which can never be undone. No earthquake came to swallow up the Forties: no volcano overflowed to fuse their little properties into one. The landlords therefore desired that the men whom they had made freeholders should be disfranchised. They pleaded, and truly, that these multitudes were led by the priests, and that their numbers were so great as to swamp all the rest of the county constituency; so that the representation of the Irish counties would be wholly in the hands of the Catholic leaders. The wish of many landlords was that the franchise should be restricted within a twenty pound qualification: but the government would not hear of anything higher than a ten pound franchise.

The pleas on the other side were of the iniquity of playing fast and loose in this manner with political liberties, and of treating a merely inconvenient constituency in the same manner as a corrupt one. No corruption, no moral disqualification, was alleged against the Forties. They had at first been under the influence of the Protestant landlords, and they were now under that of the Catholic priests: but every principle of political morality taught that the true remedy for such dependence was, not in retrogression, but in promoting the freedom and enlightenment of the class so easily led. There was irreparable mischief in visiting with the same penalties the superstitious voters who were led by their priests, and the corrupt who were bought with gold. As for considerations of expediency, the worst dangers, the only appreciable dangers arising from this large constituency, would be over when the Catholic

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Relief Bill was passed. Formidable as the action of this constituency might be when directed towards objects not yet legalized, it could no longer be mischievous when Catholics had free entrance into parliament. If every county in Ireland should send Catholic members to parliament, where was the evil? It could only happen through the real preponderance of Catholics in the constituency, and would afford a fair representation, while the Catholic element in the legislature would still be small in the presence of the Protestantism of the rest of the empire. It ought not to be forgotten, too, by the friends of the Catholics, that their relief had been obtained by this very constituency whom it was now proposed to disfranchise. Those friends of the Catholics were bound by every obligation of principle and feeling to resist such a demolition of political rights as was proposed in return for action so beneficial. But, admitting these things in the main, and scarcely attempting to excuse themselves, almost all the friends of the Catholics voted for the disfranchisement of the Forties. The bill for that object accompanied the Catholic Relief Bill through both Houses, and received the Royal assent at the same time. In each House only seventeen voted in favour of the rights of the Forties, while the majority in favour of their disfranchisement was 122 in the Lords, and 206 in the Commons. Among the voters we do not find the names of Mr. Huskisson, and some others who spoke against the Disfranchisement Bill. They contented themselves with stating the grounds of their disapprobation, and then stultified their speeches by voting with the government or not at all. The quietness with which the decision of parliament was received in Ireland, was a remarkable evidence of the importance of the great measure of relief. Every one was engrossed with that. The Association sat no longer, and could not therefore remonstrate. O'Connell strove to turn away attention from the wrongs of the Forties whom he had deserted, and to occupy all minds with the great boon just obtained, and the spectacle of his attempt to take his seat. No one could have believed beforehand that so sweeping a disfranchisement of any class in society could have taken place with so little remonstrance or threat of retribution.

Hansard, xx. 1363,
xxi. 441.

It was thought by many persons that the dignity of the Catholic Relief Bill was lowered by its containing a clause evidently intended to exclude Mr. O'Connell from parliament till he should have been re-elected. There was, perhaps, a strong temptation to show him up to his followers, to whom he had pledged his reputation as a lawyer that he could sit in parliament without taking the oaths. The point might have been regarded as still disputable if Mr. O'Connell had been allowed to take his seat, in any manner, without being re-elected; and therefore the admission to parliament, by means of the new oath, was limited to the case of "any person professing the Roman Catholic religion, who shall after the commencement of this Act be returned as a Member of the House of Commons." The matter was easily settled by this clause; but there were many who thought it a pity that justice should stoop from her height to humble and annoy an individual who was virtually triumphant. The discussion occasioned by Mr. O'Connell's claiming his seat without a new election was considered by the country an extraordinary spectacle; and not a little astonishment was expressed at the difficulty which the

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Annual Register,
1829, p. 104.

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House seemed to find in settling the bearings of a law just passed by themselves.

Mr. O'Connell, supported by Lords Ebrington and Duncannon, presented himself to be sworn at the table of the House of Commons, on the 15th of May. He was not, after all, the first Catholic member who so presented himself; for Lord Surrey, the son of the Duke of Norfolk, had been elected for Horsham during the Easter recess, and had taken his seat: but the strongest interest naturally attached to the appearance of Mr. O'Connell. The clerk offered the Oath which had been repealed by the late Act: and Mr. O'Connell objected to it, on the ground that it was no longer in force, its repeal being distinctly declared in the new Act. The clerk communicated the objection to the Speaker, who had, of course, made up his mind what to do and say. He addressed the House, declaring his opinion that the election having taken place under the old law, the oaths imposed by the old law must be taken, to entitle any member to sit in that House. The House might be appealed to by petition from without, or by the question being raised within itself. Meantime, Mr. O'Connell must withdraw. As soon as Mr. O'Connell had withdrawn, Mr. Brougham moved that he should be recalled, in order to be heard in regard to his claim. Every one was aware that he must be heard. As it required some consideration whether he should be heard at the table or at the bar, the debate was adjourned from the present Friday to Monday the 18th. On that day, Mr. O'Connell spoke at length at the bar, and astonished some of his hearers as much by the gentlemanly moderation of his tone and manner as by the strength of his pleas. When he finished, opinion was very much divided as to his construction of his case; and some proposed that, as there appeared even to the lawyers to be doubt, Mr. O'Connell should have the benefit of the doubt, and be at once admitted on taking the new oath. There would, however, have been no real kindness to him and his constituents in so admitting him as to leave room for any question as to the legality of his position: and the true reason for the proposal probably was, the desire to avoid the excitement of a new Clare election at that time. The Solicitor-General having moved that Mr. O'Connell was not entitled to sit without first taking the Oath of Supremacy, the question was pressed to a division, when the numbers were 190 to 116 in favour of Mr. O'Connell's exclusion.

Hansard, xxi.
1379.

Hansard, xxi.
1458.

When Mr. O'Connell appeared at the bar, the next day, to hear the decision of the House, he was asked whether he was ready to take the Oath of Supremacy. He requested permission to look at the Oath; and, after considering it for a short time, observed, "I see, in this Oath, one assertion as to a matter of fact which I know is not true; and I see in it another assertion, as to a matter of opinion, which I believe is not true. I therefore refuse to take this Oath."—Then ensued some discussion as to whether a writ should be issued for a new election, or an Act be passed for the relief of Mr. O'Connell, in order to avoid the excitement of a new election: but the issue of the writ was agreed to without a division.

Annual Register,
1829, p. 114.

Mr. O'Connell was elected without opposition: but not for this was the language of his addresses and speeches the less violent and outrageous. He

left not a moment's doubt in the mind of any one of his intention to keep up agitation in Ireland, by means as indefensible in themselves as ever, while they had no longer the excuse of being the resort of a man under persecution. The atrocity of his language in regard to all English statesmen is scarcely credible now, even when the speeches themselves are before our eyes: and this incendiarism of course appears worse after his having shown how mild and moderate he could appear away from home, and among persons too enlightened to be animated by violent language. He pledged himself to obtain the repeal of everything objectionable in the new Act,—the disfranchisement of the Forties, and the checks upon the increase of monachism in Ireland. He promised everything the Irish would like to have, if the county of Clare would return him now: and among other things, the Repeal of the Union. From this time the cry of Repeal was Mr. O'Connell's tool for cultivating the agitation by which, in regard to mind, fame, and fortune, he lived. From this time he was dishonoured in the eyes of all upright men. Up to this time he had had a good cause, and was truly the hero of it. There was many another good cause yet to be advocated for Ireland, of which he might have been the hero,—of which he must have been the hero, if he had had in him anything of the heroic element. But from this time, his true glory was extinguished. He rose in influence, power, and notoriety, to an eminence such as no other individual citizen has attained in modern times in our country: but the higher he rose in these respects, the deeper he sank in the esteem of those whose esteem is essential to the establishment of true fame. Up to this time, he might be a patriot, though his methods were too much those of a demagogue: up to this time, he had a clear, definite, and virtuous aim before him, and he followed it to the point of success: but henceforward he professed aims which were not only unreal, but which he evidently did not expect that rational people could suppose to be real. Henceforward there was no more stability, no more of the dignity which is involved in a noble cause:—he made men fear him, court him, groan under him, admire him, and (as regards the ignorant lower class of Irish) adore him: but from this moment no man respected him. After his addresses at the second Clare election, there could be no more mistake about O'Connell.

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The Catholic Association assembled again, under the name of an "Aggregate Meeting" of the Catholics, to promote the re-election of Mr. O'Connell. The Rent was still in existence,—a large balance of its funds being in the hands of the treasurers, and disposable only at the bidding of the body which had collected it. Five thousand pounds of this money were voted towards the expenses of the new elections. On the 30th of July, Mr. O'Connell was returned without opposition, nearly a month after parliament had risen; so that he did not take his seat till the opening of the next session—February, 1830.

Annual Register
1829, p. 125.

Here then we have witnessed the close of one of the most important controversies which ever agitated society, in any age or country. In significance it perhaps yields to no social controversy whatever:—in importance it must of course yield to some few great organic questions which concern essential principles of government. It must be considered as of less importance, for instance, in a large view, than the question of Reform of Parliament. But it

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was practically, and on a near view, of more pressing urgency than any other, or than all others put together: and under the pressure of this urgency, men generally judged amiss of the issues,—as men are wont to do in circumstances so critical. The No-Popery terrorists were scarcely more mistaken in their anticipations of woe and destruction from the emancipation of the Catholics than the liberal politicians of the time were in their expectations of the contentment and tranquillity which were to ensue in Ireland. The last reasonably laughed at the hobgoblin images of the Pope and the Jesuits which the London Tories and Irish Orangemen conjured up, to frighten themselves and everybody else whom they could alarm: they reasonably insisted on the impossibility of doing anything for Ireland till this measure of relief should be granted: but they unreasonably went further in their expectations, and concluded that the tranquillity of Ireland would follow from the measure of relief. Mr. O'Connell had said that it would; but all who looked at the aspect of affairs for themselves, setting at naught the word of Mr. O'Connell as it deserved, saw that Mr. O'Connell never meant that Ireland should be tranquillized; and that if he had wished for her tranquillization ever so earnestly, he could not have effected it. A sudden change in the law could not make a permanent change in the temper of a nation;—even of a nation which knew how to reverence law. But by the Irish, the function and the value of law had never been understood; and it was now Mr. O'Connell's daily and nightly care that the people should not be the better disposed towards the law for its having become favourable to them. In his popular addresses at this time, we find the pervading thought and purpose to be inducing the people to distrust and despise legislation. He told them that he had got the new law for them, and could get as much more as he liked; and he represented the whole administration of law and justice in Ireland as purposely hostile to them, and to be regarded only for the sake of safety,—whether in the form of obedience or evasion. He advocated, both by precept and example, a wholly empirical method of political and social existence, instead of using his efforts to bring society into a tranquil organic state. Accordingly, the Relief measure appeared to produce no effect whatever upon the temper and troubles of Ireland. A multitude of Catholics found themselves deprived of the franchise: and landlords, Protestant and Catholic, found the value of their property much diminished by the operation of the same provision. The Orangemen became more furious and bigoted through fear and jealousy of their triumphant neighbours: and those triumphant neighbours were urged on by their leaders to insufferable insolence towards the government and sister-nation which had granted them relief no longer possible to be withheld. The list of Irish outrages, the pictures of Irish crime which follow, in the registers of the time, the record of Catholic Emancipation are very painful: but they show, not that there was anything wrong in the procedure of relief, but that it had been too long delayed. There could not have been stronger evidence that a less generous measure would have done no good and much mischief.—As it was, there was no room for regret that the right thing had been done at last, and done in the freest and amplest spirit and manner. If there was any cause for regret, it was that it had not been done long before: and also that even its promoters should so little understand

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the operation of tyrannical restrictions as to believe that their effects would cease with their existence. Injury may be forgiven, and even forgotten:—insult may be forgiven, though perhaps never forgotten: but the temper and character generated under insult and injury cannot, by any process, be changed at once into a healthful condition of trustfulness, integrity, and good-humour. The emancipators of the Catholics therefore had to put up with a different fate from that which had been predicted for them by the true patriots and best political prophets, who had anticipated a brighter coming time for Ireland. They had not grateful Ireland at their feet, relieved from the raging demon—calm, clothed, and right in mind: but, on the contrary, it could scarcely be seen whether or no the demon was really cast out. There was no gratitude, no peace, no trust, no inclination to alliance for great common objects. But then, on the other hand, there was infinite relief in the sense of the removal of wrong, in safety from revolution and civil war; in consciousness that the way was now clear for the regeneration of Ireland;—clear as far as the political conscience of England was concerned. Ireland was not, under her new emancipation, what her Grattans and Plunkets had expected; nor what the Cannings and Broughams and Wellingtons and Peels had hoped to see her; but it was enough for support that the right act was done, and that the grand obstruction of all was removed, though so many more were found to exist, that, after a lapse of twenty years, we see no end to them yet.

CHAPTER VIII.

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THE Catholic Question was so engrossing to the mind of the whole nation, that the records of the year present few notices of other subjects. In connection with it, however, some incidents occurred which are worthy of note.

CATHOLIC PEERS.

When the House of Lords assembled after the Easter holidays, on the 28th of April, there was an unusually full attendance, and many ladies were present, in expectation of a very interesting spectacle. On the entrance of a group of persons, who proceeded to the table, there was a profound silence; amidst which, three Catholic peers,—the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Clifford, and Lord Dorner,—took the oaths. They had obtained entrance at last to the legislative assembly where their fathers sat and ruled when their faith was that of the whole land. In those days, the cathedrals were theirs, and the Universities, and the crown, and the legislature;—all the “thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers,” of the civilised world; and now, here was a little remnant of the old Catholic peerage re-entering upon the function of government under a sad reduction of pomp and circumstance. To the student of history and the antiquarian, the spectacle was one of deep and somewhat melancholy interest; but the more ignorant among the possessors of power looked upon these peers of ancient lineage as a sort of intruders,—as the newest order of upstarts, whose admission vulgarized their Protestant legislature, while endangering its Protestantism. Here, however, was the hereditary Earl Marshal of England present once more as a Peer of Parliament: and he and his companions were soon after joined by more of their own faith. On the 1st of May, Lords Stafford, Petre, and Stourton, took the oaths, and their seats. Soon after, Lord Eldon paid a visit to two melancholy Duchesses, who showed him their vast collections of Protestant speeches, protestations, and pledges,—“some in gold letters,” which, in better days, the ladies had taken for an ample security that no Catholic would ever sit as a legislator: but their sympathising old friend told them they might now throw all those valued securities into the fire. One of these ladies was the wife of “the young Duke of Richmond, who did very well in all he said during the debates” against the admission of the Catholics, and in opposition to the Ministry. Though he failed in his object, he was not without his reward for his opposition. “I hear,” writes Lord Eldon, “that he is a great favourite with the King, which seems not to be the fortune, be it good or bad, at this moment, of those addicted to his Ministers.”

Life of Lord
Eldon, iii. 94.

CHANGES IN THE
MINISTRY.

In the same cause, Sir Charles Wetherell, the Attorney General, had made sacrifices. The Administration had hoped that he would at least have kept silence on their great measure, though he had refused to prepare the bill; but he held it dishonest to keep silence, threw his whole powers into opposition,

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and of course was immediately dismissed from his office; in which he was succeeded by Sir James Scarlett, who had been Attorney General under Mr. Canning. Another change was occasioned by the retirement of the Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Clarence, who was thought by the straightforward and simple-mannered Premier to have mixed up too much of the popularity-seeking of the Heir Presumptive with the business of his office. There had been a vast deal of jaunting and cruising about, presenting of colours, preparation of shows on sea and land, which appeared to the Duke of Wellington to be more expensive and foolish than in any way serviceable; and it is believed that the retirement of the Lord High Admiral was caused by a plain expression of the Premier's opinion on this matter. It is said that on a long account for travelling expenses being sent in to the Treasury by the Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Wellington endorsed the paper, "No travelling expenses allowed to the Lord High Admiral," and dismissed it. The health of the Duke of Clarence was unsatisfactory at this time;—enough so to justify his retirement without other cause. His office merged again into that of First Lord of the Admiralty, which was held by Lord Melville, who was succeeded at the Board of Control by Lord Ellenborough. It was believed at the time that the Ministers would have liked to offer the Privy Seal to Lord Grey, but that the King could not be asked to approve of it. Lord Grey's time was approaching, but it was not quite yet. Meantime, the Ministers "took Lord Rosslyn, as another Whig."

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 92.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

While waiting for Lord Grey, however, the subject of Parliamentary Reform was not dropped. It was brought forward on the 2nd of June in an extraordinary manner. The Marquess of Blandford declared himself unhappy in the thought that the "borough-market" was now so thrown open to Catholics, as that there was no longer any security for the liberties of Englishmen, or for the prosperity of their manufactures and commerce. Such an influx of Catholics into parliament might be secured by the purchase of boroughs as that the voice of the nation might be silenced, and Protestantism extinguished. The mover brought forward two resolutions,—one declaring that there existed boroughs and small constituencies which might be bought for money; and the other, that the continuance of such boroughs, and of such practices in them, was disgraceful and injurious in every way. The Resolutions were negatived by a majority of 74 in a House of 184. The debate, and the occurrence which excited it, occasioned great amusement to the liberal party in the House; and Mr. William Smith observed, that "one effect, he was happy to find, had been produced by the Roman Catholic Relief Bill—an effect which its best friends had not anticipated: it appeared to have transformed a number of the highest Tories in the land to something very nearly resembling radical reformers."

Hansard, xxi. 1688.

A few days before the Relief Bill went to the Lords, the whole country was electrified by the news that the Prime Minister had fought a duel on account of the bill, or rather on the implication of his honour in the bill. These were days when foolish men were more foolish, and hasty men more hasty than usual: and a very foolish and hasty charge against the Duke of Wellington, of designs to overthrow the Church and Constitution under false pretences, was put forth in the newspapers, in a letter from Lord Winchilea

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Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 58.

to the Secretary of the Committee for establishing King's College, London. It is generally agreed that gentlemen must judge for themselves about the requisitions of their honour: but it certainly appeared to the great majority of the nation rather amusing that the Duke of Wellington should think it any more necessary to vindicate himself against a clumsy charge of secret conspiracy against the constitution, than to show his courage by fighting a duel. A graver question was whether it could be justifiable in the head of the government to risk his life, at a juncture so extraordinary, in a personal quarrel. The Duke gives his own view in the letter to Lord Winchilsea which contains his challenge. Every effort had been used to induce the Earl to make reparation for his calumnious expressions, which he refused to do, unless the Duke would explain how long he had entertained his present political views;—a requisition wholly absurd on the face of it. "The question for me now to decide is this," the Duke wrote on the 20th of March. "Is a gentleman who happens to be the King's Minister to submit to be insulted by any gentleman who thinks proper to attribute to him disgraceful or criminal motives for his conduct as an individual? I cannot doubt of the decision which I ought to make on this question. Your lordship is alone responsible for the consequences." The Earl did not choose to be responsible for the death of the Prime Minister of England, at a most critical time in the history of the country: and perhaps he was conscious of wrong. After receiving the Duke's fire uninjured, he fired in the air: and then permitted his second to deliver to the second of the Duke of Wellington a declaration of regret and retractation, which he caused to be published in the newspapers. It was an absurd affair; but it might have cost the nation dear.

SILK DUTIES.

Hansard, xxi.
744.

The distress among the silk-weavers being extreme this year, an attempt was made in parliament to procure a reversal of the free-trade policy of Mr. Huskisson. It was so plainly shown, however, that, whatever the distress might have been in any case, it was aggravated to excess by the ignorance and violence of the unhappy operatives, that the agitation of the subject produced an issue the reverse of that which had been hoped. It was shown that at Coventry the handloom weavers were thrown out of work by the introduction of machinery, which, instead of learning to use, they attempted to destroy. The London silk weavers struck for wages which could not be obtained, and destroyed by night the webs and material of workmen who would not join the strike. To revert to the old restrictive policy could be no remedy for evils like these. Instead of this, the duties on raw silk were again lowered, amidst prophecies of ruin within the House, and outside,—in Bethnal-green and Spitalfields,—scenes of fierce riot which Mr. Peel declared that he knew to be intended to intimidate the House from lowering the duties.

THE BUDGET.

The Budget occupied little time and attention this session. The report of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, on the whole, favourable: but the surplus was not greater than was required to be set apart for the reduction of the National Debt; and there was therefore no diminution of taxation.

GAME LAWS.

A bill passed the Commons this session for legalizing the sale of game. It came up to the Lords supported by the unanimous suffrage of the Lower House. Lord Wharncliffe set before the peers such an array of facts in regard to the corrupting and disorganizing effects of the Game Laws as must, one would have

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Hansard, xxi.
1592.Life of Lord El-
don, iii. 94.

thought, have procured an unanimous vote for their modification or repeal from any body of men whatever. But Lord Westmoreland soon showed that there was to be an opposition. He declared that the bill "would depopulate the country of gentlemen." This sounded very fearful; for the worst that had been apprehended hitherto was that even the total repeal of the Game Laws "would depopulate the country of" hares and pheasants. His lordship "was sure that the friends of liberty in the other house must have been asleep when this bill passed." And now Lord Eldon seems to have thought that the friends of liberty,—that is, of aristocratic sports,—were napping in a little too much security in the Lords' House. He speaks of his own opposition to the measure, and says, "The Prime Minister opposed this bill also, and we old Tories thought ourselves safe in our views of defeating it; but many of the old Tories, being very much out of humour, would not buckle to, and the Whigs the old Opposition, all sticking together, and I suppose courting popularity with the lower orders by their vote, let the Duke have something like a proof that they were mightier than he; and so he was in a minority." The bill was read a second time by a majority of 10; but the Peers took more care of their "liberty" next time; and the majority—of two—was on the other side. The jail must still be crowded with peasants sent to that school of crime for catching wild animals:—the life of a hare or a pheasant must still be protected more carefully than the character and liberty of a man; and still, while hundreds of thousands of the working classes were sinking into disease and death from want of bread, the game of noblemen was to be encouraged to eat and destroy food to the value of £5,000,000 in a year. The bill would have done little in comparison with the reform which was then, and is still, needed; but that little was refused by the lords of the soil, who could not have fully known what they were doing, but who preferred liberty of sporting to the trouble of inquiring. Lord Eldon's language shows that he was aware that the Game Laws were disliked by the "lower orders:" but he was notoriously fond of shooting: and it seems not to have occurred to him, nor to some wiser and better men than he, that it is dangerous to pursue an aristocratic amusement at the expense of disgusting the middle, and corrupting and exasperating the "lower orders" of their countrymen. This subject comes up again and again in the recent history of England; and even yet, the sportsmen in parliament have not laid aside their tone of levity on a matter which has in it all the seriousness that can attach to any political topic whatever. While reviewing the course and issue of other great questions, the mind occasionally reverts to this yet pending one, with some wonder whether in this case as in so many preceding, there will be insolence, levity, and blindness, to the last moment, to be succeeded by panic, rapid conversion, and precipitate legislation. Such a speculation may be laughed at by those who look at the Game Law question as one of liberty of sporting, regarding merely the pleasures and privileges of gentlemen, and the lives of hares and birds: but there is another side to it, as we shall have occasion to see hereafter. The true and permanent aspect of the question is that in which it regards the feeding or robbing the hungry,—the deterioration or improvement of the land,—the filling or emptying of our prisons,—the increase or diminution of crime,—the oppression or redemption of a million of rural labourers;—one might say, the very existence of

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society as it is and is to be. Of course, the Game Laws will give way sooner than our social organization: but the two cannot much longer exist together; and when the sportsmen in parliament attain to seeing this, the grave aspect of the question will present itself to them as it does now to those who foresee the end. Meantime, we have noted one of the first attacks on the aristocratic privileges of the gun, and the kind of thought, speech, and temper, which the attack called forth.

RELATIONS WITH
PORTUGAL.

One of the most interesting debates of the Session was on the subject of our relations with the Queen of Portugal. The conduct of England in preserving her neutrality as to the *de facto* government of Portugal had been apparently so strange as to cause eager and angry discussion, not only on the Continent, and on the other side of the Atlantic, but in the British parliament. It is well that cases of such extreme nicety in regard to international honour occur now and then, embarrassing as they may be at the moment; for so close an appeal to principles is good for the national conscience, and a noble exercise for the national rulers. Seldom has there been a case more trying to flesh and blood than the one before us, or more honourable to the conscience of the government. Thus, at least, is the matter regarded now, at a distance of twenty years; though at the time it was difficult for the majority to enter into the motives of a conduct apparently contradictory.

In August, 1828, Lord Aberdeen had been applied to by the Portuguese refugees for permission to send a large quantity of arms and ammunition from England to Brazil. The Minister replied that permission would be granted on a pledge from the applicants that the arms and ammunition should not be employed in the civil dissensions in Portugal, in which England was bound, as a neutral power, not to interfere. The pledge was offered; Count Itabayana declaring that he could give a clear and precise reply,—that there was no intention of employing these stores in the civil dissensions of Portugal. Yet, the arms and powder were immediately conveyed, not to Brazil, but to Terceira. Terceira, the largest island of the Azores, which are under the dominion of Portugal, had declared in favour of the young Queen, and driven off the troops of Don Miguel. The sending these arms there in such a mode awakened the suspicions of our government that men would soon be sent after them; and thus the island would be garrisoned and strengthened by England for war against the actual ruler of Portugal; a proceeding which would have been a direct breach of neutrality. In October, application was made for a conveyance for the Portuguese troops to Terceira. The reply of the Duke of Wellington was, that “England was determined to maintain a neutrality in the civil dissensions of Portugal, and that the King, with that determination, could not permit the ports and arsenals of England to be made places of equipment for hostile armaments.” He intimated also that the 4,000 Portuguese troops could not be allowed to remain in any English port, as a military body, ready for action. All needful hospitality should be shown them; but they must disband, and distribute themselves over the neighbouring towns and villages, or wherever they pleased, and not remain concentrated in Plymouth. The answer was, that sooner than separate and dissolve their military organization, they would go to Brazil. The Duke’s reply was, that we did not wish to send them away; but that they could repair to Brazil if they

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chose; and a British convoy was offered to protect them from Portuguese cruisers. This convoy was declined. In the next December application was made for permission and means of transport to send the refugees, unharmed, to Terceira; and this was refused, on the ground of the former deception. The applicants were told—"We have been already deceived; you profess to sail as unarmed men, but you will find arms on your arrival at Terceira." The profession then, on the part of the Portuguese leaders, was that they were going to Brazil; but the Government were aware that they sailed with false clearances, which were obtained at the Custom House as for Gibraltar, for Virginia, and for other places. The expedition consisted of four vessels, which carried 652 officers and men, under the command of General Count Saldanha, who had been the Portuguese war-minister under the Constitution. Distinct notice had been given to the heads of the expedition that any attempt to land at Terceira would be prevented; and that a British force would be found ready for the purpose stationed off the island.

Hansard, xxi. 1635.

A small force of armed vessels had, in fact, been despatched under the command of Captain Walpole, of the *Ranger*, with instructions to cruise off the island, and to inform the Portuguese under Saldanha, if they appeared, that he had authority to prevent their landing. "And," continued the instructions, "should they persist, notwithstanding such warning, in hovering about, or in making any efforts to effect a landing, you are then to use force to drive them away from that neighbourhood, and keep sight of them until you shall be convinced, by the course they may steer, and the distance they may have proceeded, that they have no intention of returning to the Western Islands." As Captain Walpole was keeping his watch, on the 16th of January, off Port Praya, in Terceira, the expedition appeared. The vessel which carried Saldanha came first. It paid no attention to the two shots fired by the *Ranger* to bring them to; and appeared resolved to push into port at all hazards. Captain Walpole was compelled to fire; and his shot killed one man and wounded another. That single shot echoed round the world; and it was years before the reverberation died away. Everybody in all countries, who did not know what had passed unseen, asked what this could mean. England had received the young Queen and her adherents with all hospitality and encouragement; had withdrawn her ambassador from Lisbon on the avowal of Don Miguel's usurpation: and now was firing upon the young Queen's troops, when they were entering the port of an island which had remained faithful to her. The most mortifying comment was that of the usurper. Don Miguel announced in the *Lisbon Gazette*, that "the conduct of England towards Portugal, in such circumstances, had been above all praise." The steady reply of the English Government was, that we were not at war with Portugal; and we should not go to war with Portugal while her conflicts were civil. Our obligations were to defend her, on her own appeal, against foreign aggression; and beyond these obligations we would not go. Our immediate business was to preserve our neutrality.

TERCEIRA.

Annual Register,
1829, p. 188.Annual Register,
1829, p. 191.

Captain Walpole's shot compelled Saldanha to a conference, at the end of which he declared that he considered the whole expedition prisoners to the English. Captain Walpole took care not to indicate the direction in which the Portuguese should depart; and he told them to go where they pleased;

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only not to stay where they were. They sailed westwards; and he followed them; Saldanha keeping up the affectation of supposing him the captor of the expedition. On the 24th, when the vessels were within five hundred miles of Scilly, Captain Walpole thought it time to put an end to this pretence, lest any colour should be afforded, by their simultaneous arrival in the Channel, to the charge that England had violated her neutrality, to the injury of the Constitutional cause. He therefore sent to ask Saldanha where he was going. Saldanha expressed astonishment at the question, and said that prisoners of war always went wherever their captors chose to lead them. Captain Walpole, declaring that Saldanha's conduct determined him to escort the expedition no further, turned back to Terceira, where he intercepted another vessel, charged with Portuguese officers, and fitted out from London. The vessel was just about to enter Port Praya. Captain Walpole supplied her with water and provisions, and bade her go. The case of the Portuguese does seem hard when viewed by itself; but their repeated deceptions show their own consciousness that they had no right to involve a neutral power, whose hospitality they were receiving, in their political conflicts. If they had brought their vessels and stores from Portugal or Brazil, or from any country beyond the limit of Portuguese alliance, it would have been well and good: but their conduct, however palliated by the temptation and distress of their circumstances, was not such as the English government could allow to pass unrebuked and unexplained.

STATE OF LISBON.

Don Miguel's conduct was not such as to permit any reasonable person to suppose that the English government could have any partiality on his behalf. He set aside the sentences of the Courts on political prisoners when they were not severe enough to please him; and actually caused death to be inflicted by his own mere order, when transportation had been decreed by the judges. He imprisoned multitudes, and confiscated their goods to himself without any pretence of law; and even attempted the life of his sister, the late Regent, with his own hand. The princess was suspected by him of having sent a servant to England with money and jewels, to save her property from his rapacious grasp. He rushed, armed, into her chamber, and demanded an account of the departure of this servant. When she did not reply, he rushed upon her with a bayonet which was fixed upon a pistol in his hand. She grappled with him, and actually threw him down. He sprung up, and again attacked her: but by this time her chamberlain was in the way. Don Miguel stabbed the chamberlain in the arm, and fired his pistol at the Princess. The ball killed a servant by her side, but she was rescued by other servants who came at the noise of the scuffle. Under such a sovereign, Portugal indeed deserved the pity expressed for her misfortunes in the King's Speech delivered by Commission at the close of the session of 1829,—on the 24th of June:—"It is with increased regret that his Majesty again adverts to the condition of the Portuguese Monarchy. But his Majesty commands us to repeat his determination to use every effort to reconcile conflicting interests, and to remove the evils which press so heavily upon a country, the prosperity of which must ever be an object of his Majesty's solicitude."

Hansard, xxi, 1831.

KING'S SPEECH.

The Speech announced, in decorous terms, that the war with Turkey was turned over to Russia. Ambassadors from France and England were on their

way to Constantinople; and Russia had not, on account of her own quarrel with the Porte, withdrawn her name from the negotiations for the final pacification of Greece. The King thanked his Parliament for their attention to the affairs of Ireland and the Catholics, which he had especially recommended to their deliberations; and sincerely hoped that the important measures they had passed would tranquillize Ireland, and draw closer the bonds of union between her and the rest of the empire.

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The King was not gone to the German baths and Hanover, leaving "Clarence" or "Sussex" to be king of the Catholics. He remained in seclusion at Windsor, Brighton, or London. It was generally understood that he was ill; and universally suspected that he was very miserable. The close of his unhappy life was now not far off; and the state of certain foreign affairs troubled him almost as much as the achievements of his own ministers and parliament at home.

CHAPTER IX.

1827—30.

AFFAIRS OF
FRANCE.

IT was about the political state of France that the King and Ministers of England were troubled at the close of the year 1829. By that time, indeed, their relations of sympathy with the government of France were becoming the cause of more reasonable anxiety than even feelings of mutual hostility could have been. To understand this we must look back a little.

At the time when Mr. Canning sent British troops to Portugal to repel aggressions from Spain, which were supported by France, there were three parties in France by whom England was very differently regarded. In 1827, indeed, there was such disorder in the political state of France, that there was scarcely any subject on which the three great parties were not in bitter enmity against each other; and Mr. Canning's foreign policy was naturally a prominent topic.

The French King and his government justified England, in word, as well as by the act of recalling their own ambassadors from Madrid, on occasion of Ferdinand's interference with Portugal. But they had their cause of quarrel with Mr. Canning. They vehemently resented his expressions about the occupation of Spain by the French in 1823; about his method of baffling her policy by separating the South American colonies from Spain; and about the power which would be wielded by England in the event of a war of opinion in Europe. This ruling party, called the moderate royalist party, was in 1827 supposed to be the strongest. The other two were the ultra-royalist, which would have supported Ferdinand through everything, would have placed and upheld Don Miguel on the throne of Portugal, would have made the Jesuits masters of education in France, and which hated England to the last extremity; and the liberal party, which justified Mr. Canning throughout, and sought to make their own liberties approximate to those of England.

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SOCIAL INQUIRY-
TUDE.

Men could hardly tell, at the commencement of the session of 1827, how to account for the agitation and turbulence pervading society in France, of which every one was sensible. Everybody was expecting that something fearful would happen soon; yet no one seemed to know why. The minister Villèle was extremely unpopular; but this appeared to be rather on account of something he was expected to do than from anything he had yet done. The financial statement of the session was very favourable. It came out afterwards that it was delusive, and that the condition of the people in the provinces was deplorable; but this was not yet understood in Paris. From some unknown cause, everything seemed thrown out of its course, so that events were no longer calculable, nor political bodies reliable. In the preceding session the Minister had been perplexed by the new Chamber of Peers, where he had supposed he might have altogether his own way. The Peers had rejected his project of a kind of law of primogeniture, and had refused to

tolerate the presence of the Jesuits in establishments of public instruction. 1827—30.

The other Chamber sank in the national estimation from day to day; and in proportion, the liberal party within it rose into strength and influence. The newspaper press harassed the Minister by its unremitting hostility: while the journals which he held at his disposal had scarcely any readers. The Minister saw that he must either resign or put down the press. Unhappily for himself and his trust, he chose the latter course; and here was the first thunder-clap of the tempest whose distant mutterings had held the nation in dread.

During the preceding year the bishops had been urgent with the government to restrain the licentiousness of the press, and the ministerial majority of the Chamber of Deputies had carried addresses for the same object; and now, at the opening of the session, a bill was brought in which must have gratified the expectations of the bishops and the Tory deputies to the utmost. This bill was the production of Peyronnet, keeper of the seals, and minister of justice. Hitherto the law had provided that five copies of every new work should be deposited in the appropriate government department. But this deposit was made at the moment of publication, allowing no time for revision by the police—a purpose never contemplated in the arrangement. Now it was to be enacted, that no work of twenty sheets and under should be exposed for sale, or be allowed, in any portion, to leave the printing-office, till five complete days had elapsed from the period of deposit; nor any work of above twenty sheets, till after the expiration of ten days. The penalties were fines and confiscation of the edition. So much for works not periodical. As for periodicals, cheapness was to be done away with by the imposition of heavy stamps. The publication of the political journals was to be rendered almost impossible by restrictions as to proprietorship and editorship; and all proprietors whose case did not come within the conditions of the new law—all women, minors, and partners, beyond the number of five—were to find their property in journals extinguished within thirty days from the passing of the law, unless they could previously accomplish a forced sale. Fines and other punishments, and stamp duties, were heavily augmented. A fine of five hundred francs (about £21) was ordained for every article relating to the private life of any Frenchman living, or any foreigner resident in France, without express permission being obtained from the individual noticed; and, lest there should be any remissness in such individuals, from a dislike to bringing their private affairs under the notice of the courts, it was provided that the public prosecutor might take up the case if the aggrieved party did not.

Annuaire, 1827, p. 53.

LAW OF THE PRESS.

Annuaire, 1827, pp. 70—77.

It is worth while giving this brief sketch of Peyronnet's atrocious law of the press, to show what the Bourbon government of France was in its latter day. The wickedness of bringing forward such a law in the nineteenth century can be equalled only by the folly and blindness of the venture. The King and his ministers might as reasonably and hopefully have proposed to put a padlock on the tongue of every Frenchman.

The Chamber would hardly listen to the description of the law when it was proposed. One of the deputies, M. Casimir Périer, quitting his seat, exclaimed, "You might as well propose a law for the suppression of printing in France, for the benefit of Belgium." Shouts of surprise and indignation burst forth

1827—30. at intervals; and at the close of Peyronnet's speech, there was too much confusion to permit the continuance of business. Of course, the Journals all came out furiously the next day;—all except the Ministerial papers, which nobody read. At the earliest possible moment, petitions began to pour in from the remotest of the provinces. The most striking, however, of the myriad of remonstrances called forth by the occasion was that of the French Academy. It was particularly striking on account of the undue subservience to royalty for which that great society was notorious. But this law was too obviously injurious to the interests of science and literature to be allowed to pass without the strongest protest that could be offered by the Association which represented the science and literature of France. Of the 28 members who attended the discussion as to what should be done, 18 voted for the remonstrance, and 4 went away without voting, leaving only six in favour of keeping quiet under the infliction. M. Michaud was one of the speakers who exposed the consequences of the law: and the three members who were charged with the preparation of the remonstrance were MM. Chateaubriand, Lacratelle, and Villemain. The next day Villemain was deprived of his office in the Privy Council; and the government newspaper announced that M. Michaud was no longer one of the readers to the royal family, nor M. Lacratelle dramatic censor. Crowds immediately assembled before the houses of these three gentlemen, thus dismissed from office; and subscriptions were set on foot for the publication of works which it was known that they were preparing.—The Director of the Academy requested an audience of the King, to present the Memorial: and the King refused to see the Director of the Academy. He could not yet, however, prevent the French nation seeing the remonstrance; for it was published, and spread far and wide.

Annuaire, 1827,
p. 61.

Though the government was more powerful in the Chamber of Deputies (of which it had controlled the elections) than anywhere else, it had a severe struggle to obtain a majority in the Committee which was to consider the Bill; and, after all, the provisions of the law were so altered and softened that the Minister hardly knew his own Bill when it came forth from Committee. He obtained the restoration of some of its original clauses: and the Bill was sent up to the Peers by a majority of 233 votes to 134. It was commonly said that, if it passed the Peers, not more than three or four Journals would continue to appear in Paris: and the Ministers took no pains to conceal that this was exactly what they wished.

While the Peers were occupied with the Bill, the Deputies were invited to pass a measure to secure themselves against newspaper reporters. Speech was to be repressed in every direction. Men were not silenced yet, however; and they made the King aware of their opinions.—The Committee of the Peers began their work by calling before them the chief printers and book-sellers of Paris, to give evidence as to the probable operation of the law, if passed. Putting this together with the fact that of the seven who composed the Committee, four were of liberal politics, the government must have seen pretty clearly what the result was likely to be. Just at that time (April 16th) the King reviewed some of his troops and the National Guard: and the ominous silence with which he was received seems to have struck upon his heart. He called his Ministers to council the next day, and declared his will

Annuaire, 1827,
p. 147.

that the Bill for the regulation of the press should be withdrawn.—It is said that Peyronnet's appearance in the Chamber of Deputies on this 17th of April was really forlorn. He was embarrassed; his voice faltered; and the listening members could scarcely catch the words of the royal ordinance. They were immediately repeated loudly enough, however. The 30,000 journeymen who would have been deprived of bread by the passage of this law, caught up the news, and spread it over Paris: and the whole city was presently blazing with illuminations and fireworks. The rejoicings of the people were regarded by the Ministers as manifestations of revolutionary tendencies: and no one member of the administration as yet offered to resign.

1827—30.

It had been arranged, before this issue, that the King should review the National Guard on the 29th of April—"in token of his satisfaction at their zeal in his honour on the anniversary of his return to Paris." Some doubt had arisen in regard to the loyalty of a portion of this popular force; and there was a question whether the review should take place in the Court of the Tuileries—which was not the most popular locality. The King, however, declined to alter the announcement given; and the occasion was prepared for, as a great fête-day.—When the King appeared, surrounded by his brilliant staff, and followed by the whole royal family, none but loyal cries were heard: but, after a time, a voice here and there from the ranks shouted "Down with the Ministers!" "Down with the Jesuits!" The officers and comrades of those who thus shouted strove to silence them; but in vain. The King was heard to say, in a tone of great dignity, "I came here to receive homage, and not admonitions." Upon this arose a great shout of "Long live the King:" but the disloyal cries were renewed and multiplied. The King would have borne with them, as is known by his having formally signified his satisfaction with the state of the Guard, and the ceremonial of the day: but his Ministers could not forgive their share. The cries were uttered, with great rage, under their windows: they went to the King, to hold council, and sat late into the night. Before daylight, the royal and ministerial order for the disbanding of the National Guard was received by its commandant; and before seven in the morning, all the posts of the Guard were occupied by troops of the line.

REVIEW OF THE
NATIONAL
GUARDS.Annuaire, 1827,
pp. 151, 152.

Two days after the close of the session, in June, the old censorship of 1820-21 was brought into action. Everyone expected this: but nobody was the less angry. In August, government took offence at the orations and ceremonies which signalized the funeral of a deputy who had been expelled from the Chamber in 1823, and prosecuted the printers and publishers of the report of the funeral. The speakers and reporters came forward to acknowledge their share in the matter. All the parties were prosecuted;—and all authors, speakers, publishers, and printers, were acquitted, and the confiscated copies of the pamphlet ordered to be restored. Lafayette, who was one of these parties, made a kind of political progress through France; and he damaged the government, at every stage of his journey, by a plain narrative of its policy of the year.—The King was travelling at the same time. He visited the camp at St. Omer; was loyally received; enjoyed the spectacle of the improved condition of his people (which was in truth very miserable) since he visited the same regions in his younger days; and returned to Paris, fancying that all was well.

CENSORSHIP RE-
VIVED.Annuaire, 1827,
p. 252.

The next proceeding of the government remains inexplicable. The Chamber

DISSOLUTION OF
THE CHAMBER OF
DEPUTIES.

1827—30. of Deputies was more devoted to them than any future one could be expected to be: yet they dissolved it this autumn. They spared no effort to manage and control the elections; and their power of doing so was very great. But they had brought on a crisis which was too strong for them; and the new elections were fatal to the Villèle ministry. The ultra-royalists and liberals made a junction for the occasion, and returned a motley assemblage of deputies, whose only point of agreement seemed to be hostility to Villèle and his comrades. In Paris itself, every Ministerial candidate was thrown out. At the moment of dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, the King had declared the creation of seventy-six new peers in a batch. The peers, having been unmanageable, were now to be swamped. In the new batch were found the only archbishops (five) who were not peers before; and the most slavish of the creatures of the government who had been thrust into the late assemblage of deputies.

The King and his Minister were among the last to perceive that these measures would not do—that they were intolerable: but they discovered it at last; and on the 4th of January, Villèle resigned.

RESIGNATION OF
VILLELE.

Annuaire, 1827,
p. 261.

Annual Register,
1830, p. 188.

The people of Paris were on the watch. On occasion of the election returns, towards the end of November, there had been serious troubles in Paris; and it was at this time, as far as we are aware, that the first mention of barricades occurs. Some of the rioters, we are told, pursued by the patrol, raised barricades by means of the masons' tools and hewn stones which they found near the Church of St. Leu, where some new houses were in process of construction. It is two years and a half after this that we find in our own Annual Register, the first mention of barricades, and of something else. "As a detachment advanced, it was stopped by a new obstacle, a barricade formed across the street by one of those long coaches to which the Parisians have given the name of *Omnibus*."

1828. The people of Paris were, as has been said, on the watch. The countenance of every minister was examined as he came forth from royal audience, during the six weeks between the close of the elections and the resignation of Villèle; and during the whole of the next two years they remained on the watch, while a weak and incompetent ministry was kept in, only by consent of all parties, because no party could put in a set of men of its own.—During this period, minds and affairs were ripening for the great struggle to come; and everybody, unless it were the royal family, was aware that though little appeared to be done, the time was not lost.

The chief signs of the times were, first, the introduction of an impeachment of Villèle, which was allowed to stand over from the session of 1828 to the next, in order to prevent his return to office;—a proceeding of which he and his master could not complain, as the delay was reasonably accounted for by their frustration of all attempts to obtain the evidence required. Next, the continually growing proof of the impoverished condition of the people engaged in labour and trade;—and again, the introduction of more liberals into office and the Chamber;—a sure token of change;—and the more, because it was achieved by a coalition for the crisis between the liberals and the ultra-royalists.

Among those who were on the watch during all this time, was he by whom

England was brought into relation with this great French quarrel. Prince 1827—30.
 Jules de Polignac has been mentioned as the French ambassador in London who was a party to the Treaty of London in regard to Greece. Prince Polignac PRINCE POLIGNAC.
 was one of those men about whom neither the world at large, nor any one in it, knows how to be moderate:—the accomplished, narrow-minded, strong-minded, conscientious oppressor, whom the oppressed hate with extremity of hatred, and whom his associates respect and regard as a man of sincerity, conscience, and loyalty. The people of France lived in incessant mistrust of him, and dread lest he should not remain in London. The King of England and the Duke of Wellington entertained a cordial admiration, and a strong personal friendship for him; and his own sovereign was attached to him as to a faithful and able adherent and champion.—At the beginning of 1829, the Count de Ferronay, the French Foreign Minister, the most respected and trusted of the weak ministry then existing, was compelled by illness to retire from office: and immediately, Prince Polignac appeared in Paris. It was reported that he had been secretly sent for,—that, if he could be got into office, he was gradually to restore the Villèle policy; and with one intolerable aggravation—that he was to work out in France the pleasure of the Tory ministry in England. The hated Wellington, who had brought back the Bourbons, and, in this, had helped to impose the tyranny under which the French nation groaned, was now about to impose a friend and fellow-conspirator of his own upon France, and to rule the struggling nation with the rod of the Holy Alliance. If the French King and Ministry had hoped to bring in Prince Polignac, they found it would not do for this time. The Ministers themselves threatened to resign, if the Prince came in as the nominee of the King. So, Prince Polignac returned to London, after having made a speech of self-defence in the Chamber against the accusations of the newspapers. But he was not absent long. He was seen in Paris in July, a few days before the ominous close of the session of the Chambers: and on the 8th of August, the publication of some royal ordinances made known to the world the formation of what will be for ever called the Polignac Ministry, though the Prince's office was at first only that of Foreign Minister. The transactions from the time of his appointment to the stormy close of the year were such as might well disturb the feeble and anxious mind of the King of England, sinking, as he was, daily deeper in disease, in his close retirement at Windsor. The caricatures of the day, whose authors were probably not aware how ill he was, represented him as going, under pretence of fishing, to weep at Virginia Water, which spread out, by means of that influx, to a lake of handsome size. He certainly never was more reasonable than in his apprehensions for Polignac and for France,—his ideas of the welfare of France being what they were.

1829.

It is not now easy to decide what were the principles on which the Polignac ministry intended, in the first instance, to govern. When, in September, the people, indignant at the government practice of tampering with their Chamber, and thus procuring revenue by means of taxes decreed by creatures of government, formed associations for purposes of resistance to illegal taxation, the Polignac ministry made bitter complaints of misconstruction and unfair prejudgment. "Judging by the newspapers," said the Ministers in the *Moniteur* of the 19th of September, "the government dreams only

POLIGNAC MINISTRY.

Annuaire, 1829,
p. 273.

1827—30. of *coups d'état*, and contemplates the overthrow of the charter. Those who say such things know very well that the Ministers (unless they had lost all common sense) could not conceive the bare idea of violating the Charter, and substituting a government by ordinances for that of the laws. Such men know also that if the Ministers desired ever so much a method of government like this, the King would, on the first hint of such a system, thrust them out of power—out of that power which he has confided to them, in his name and under their responsibility, to govern according to the laws." The only question, with regard to these protestations, is whether they were weak or wicked. If Prince Polignac really intended in September to govern only according to law, and to cherish the Charter, the King and Prime Minister of England need not be ashamed of their friendship for him then; but they must have wholly cast him off from their respect and regard, when, in a few months, he had falsified all his professions. The French people believed nothing that he said. They expected from him exactly that which he did. The newspapers told their opinions and anticipations very plainly. While almost the whole journalist press of Paris reviled the ministry from day to day, that of London praised it and exulted in it, with a fervour so strange and so unanimous, that it was no wonder that the friendship of the two administrations became a subject of suspicion to the sensitive and unhappy people of France, and that they gave the name of "the Wellington Ministry" to the Polignac Cabinet. One of the very few English journals which thought ill of the new French ministry from first to last was the *Examiner*; and among its remarks at the time are these: "There seems to be this peculiarity about the new French Ministry; that those who know least of it approve it most. The London journals, with a few exceptions, have been in raptures with it, while the French are hurling upon it a storm of the bitterest displeasure. . . . Why the Ministry should be found good in the eyes of the English Whigs and Radicals, is more strange than that it should be overcharged with ill in the representations of the French *liberaux*. Our neighbours indeed style it a Tory Ministry; and because the Duke of Wellington's original Tory Ministry has worked better than could have been expected for us, it is supposed that Tory ministers, all over the world, must have a similar operation. A Tory Ministry cured our state of bigotry, but it may happen to kill the liberality of France. We cannot, also, but give our neighbours credit for knowing more of their own affairs than we do; and the common sentiment of the intelligent on the other side of the water seems decidedly inimical to the new administration."

England's Seven
Administrations,
i., p. 227.

The protestations of the Ministry were scarcely issued, before their authors began to show what they were worth. They renewed their war against the press. M. Bertin, responsible editor of the *Journal des Débats*, was prosecuted for the following words, which appeared in his paper on the accession of the new Ministry: "The bond of affection and confidence which united the Monarch with the people is broken. Unhappy France! unhappy King!" On these words a charge was founded of offence against the King's person and authority, on the ground that any impeachment of the King's judgment in choosing his ministers, was an attack on his authority; and any declaration that there was no longer love between the King and his people, or

between the people and their King, was an offence against his person. The courts of Paris were above trifling like this. After a deliberation of three hours as to the form of the judgment, the conclusion was that M. Bertin was acquitted; because, "however improper might be the expressions of the article complained of, and however contrary to the moderation which should be preserved in discussing the acts of the government, they did not constitute actionable offences against the royal person or dignity." Silence within the court had been enjoined: but the acclamations with which the judgment was received were deafening; and they were caught up by the crowds outside, who soon, by their shouts, let all Paris know the result of the trial. 1827—30.

Annuaire, 1829,
p. 281.

Mean time, the Cabinet was not strong in itself. Hitherto, the King or the Dauphin had presided at council; but both became weary of the dissensions and weakness which they were compelled to witness; and Prince Polignac was made President of the Council. Upon this, the best, in their opinion—the most ultra-royalist of the ministers, Labourdonnaye—withdrew. And now, the consequences of a bad season had to be met, in addition to other difficulties. Wet and cold weather had materially injured all the crops in the country: the manufacturers' stocks were large, and a multitude of people therefore unemployed, when the winter set in early, and with great severity. What would Polignac, whose head was full of old feudal ideas, do for the modern farming and manufacturing France? What would he do—and this was the most anxious question to himself—with the Chambers? The Chamber of Deputies was hostile; but to resort to a new general election could only make matters worse. It is believed that even now, on the eve of meeting the Chambers, he was undecided as to whether he would satisfy himself by merely putting down journalism (not seeing that journalism was now an expression of the national will), or whether he would supersede the electoral laws by royal ordinances, in order to obtain a Chamber which would work to his liking. Whatever might be in his mind, the fact of the case was that the monarchy and the national liberties were now brought face to face for their decisive conflict, and that Prince Polignac was not aware of it.

Annuaire, 1829,
p. 279.

Early in January (1830) the King issued a notice to the Chambers to meet on the 2nd of March. From this it was supposed that the representative part of the State was safe for the present. But there was evidently no improvement in the temper of the royal and governing clique. When the President of the Court which had acquitted M. Bertin went, according to custom, to offer to the King and royal family the usual wishes for the new year, he met with a reception which showed that, in France as in England, the first gentleman in the empire could lose his good manners in personal pique. The upright judge, M. Seguier, who had asserted the function of his court in the memorable words—"the court gives judgments and not services,"—offered his congratulations to the King, with an expression of satisfaction in the privilege of a yearly audience to tender these wishes. The stern reply of the King was "that he desired the magistrates of the court never to forget the important duties they had to fulfil, and to render themselves worthy of the marks of confidence they had received from their King." As for the royal ladies, the only word they had to give in reply to similar congratulations, was "Pass on:" and all the courtiers behaved to the judges exactly after the manner of

1830.

SUMMONS TO THE
CHAMBERS.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.
Annuaire, 1830,
p. 2.

1827—30. the royal family. Childish as this appears in the reading, it was of vast importance at the time, as showing that the government could not tolerate the independent administration of justice—the most fatal of all symptoms.

Throughout February the newspapers contained articles which hinted, or said plainly, that men were now driven to revive the old question, what France had gained by the return of the Bourbons, and whether she could prosper better under some other dynasty. Of course, the prosecutions of the journals were unremitting, and the sentences were often severe; but the more fines were imposed, the larger were the subscriptions to pay them; and the more men went to prison, the more volunteers appeared to carry on their work outside.

KING'S SPEECH.

On the 2nd of March, the King, surrounded by the royal family, met the Chambers. There was more than ordinary pomp and gravity observable in the proceedings. It was remarked, and afterwards told, in every home in France, that when the King set his foot on the step of the throne, he dropped his hat, which was picked up by the Duke of Orleans, and presented by him, kneeling on one knee. The Speech was listened to with breathless eagerness; and up to the last paragraph it gave nothing but satisfaction. It told of peace abroad, of a good state of the finances, of fidelity to the charter; but the last paragraph ruined everything. In it the King called upon the peers to aid him in governing the country well: expressed his trust in them to repudiate wicked insinuations; and declared that if obstacles to his government should arise which he could not, and did not choose to foresee, he should find strength to overcome them in the loyalty of his people. The surprise and dismay caused on the instant by these words were evident enough through all the usual loyal demonstrations of the occasion.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 7.

ADDRESS OF THE
PEERS.

The Peers replied coldly to this direct appeal, assuring his Majesty that there was indeed nothing to fear from the obstacles of faction, as the government would have the support of both Chambers, and of the great majority of the nation; as the crown and the charter—the rights of royalty and the liberties of the people—were inseparably connected, and must be transmitted undivided. This was pretty strong in the way of admonition and rebuke; but the Ministry dared not object, for fear of bringing upon themselves something worse, in the form of direct censure. The King, to whom the Address was presented on the 9th of March, ventured to congratulate himself on the substance of his sentiments having been so perfectly apprehended.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 12.

ADDRESS OF THE
DEPUTIES

The tug of war was in the other Chamber, where, from the first day of the session, the Ministers found themselves overpowered by the Liberals, who carried all the appointments of the Chamber. The attendance was very full during the days employed in the preparation of the Address. Some paragraphs of this Address declared that the Charter supposed, in order to its working, a concurrence between the mind of the Sovereign and the interests of his people; that it was the painful duty of the Deputies to declare that that concurrence existed no longer, the present Administration ordering all its acts on the supposition of the disaffection of the people; a supposition which the nation had a right to complain of, as injurious to its character, and threatening to its liberties. It was not supposed that the King entertained this distrust. His heart was too noble to admit it. But he could not be further from

desiring despotism than his people from desiring anarchy; and he was implored to have the same faith in the loyalty of the nation as the nation had in the sincerity of his promises. Finally, his Majesty was appealed to to choose between his faithful and confiding parliament, and the parties who misapprehended the calm and enlightened mind of the people of France.

1827—30.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 19.

There was doubt as to whether the King would receive this Address, though it passed by a majority of 221 to 181. He received it, however, on the 18th of March, at noon. The attendance was more numerous than usual. The President of the Chamber read the Address,—the last the unhappy Monarch was ever to receive from his parliament—with a grave and firm voice, which, however, faltered towards the close. The King listened with gravity; but, when he delivered the reply which had previously been agreed upon in council, strong emotion was evident in his voice through the constrained calmness of his manner. His reply—for which the King of England was earnestly listening in his retreat at Windsor, and the British Ministry, because the peace of our country might depend upon it—was this: “Sir: I have heard the Address which you present to me in the name of the Chamber of Deputies. I was justified in relying on the concurrence of the two Chambers, in accomplishing all the good which I contemplated. I am grieved to find that the Deputies declare that, on their part, such concurrence exists no longer. Gentlemen, I announced my intentions in my speech at the opening of the session. These intentions are immutable. The interest of my people forbids my receding from them. My Ministers will make my further purposes known to you.”

KING'S REPLY

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 44.
PROROGATION.

The next day the Chambers were prorogued to the 1st of September. And where was the King on the next 1st of September? “Long live the King!” cried some on the ministerial side. “Long live the Charter!” cried some on the opposite side. “Long live the Constitution!” shouted a voice from one of the galleries, where the citizens of Paris had crowded in, to see what would happen. The royalists set up the cry “Down with faction!” and called upon the President to order the departure of strangers; but the President's authority was at an end now that the session was closed, and the whole assemblage broke up in disorder. There were many heavy hearts in both Chambers, and in every street in Paris. It had not been supposed that the King would stand out to such a point as this. It was the first time that the Sovereign had used the power of thus untimely dispersing his parliament. The Budget was not brought forward, nor any provision made for some extraordinary expenses of the time. Every one saw that a dissolution might next be expected, and that this was a rupture which could not be healed. The Liberals, who were virtually conquerors, were sure of their ground; but they were full of solicitude about what was to happen next. The royalists were merry and confident, looking upon the present crisis as the emancipation of royalty from tutelage.

After a grand expedition had been sent off to Algiers, which, it was hoped, would divert the attention of the people from politics, and fix it upon military glory, the Chambers were dissolved, on the 16th of May; new elections ordered for June and July; and the new parliament directed to meet on the 3rd of August. And where was the King on that 3rd of August?

DISSOLUTION.

1827—30.

THE ELECTIONS.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 114.

In the elections, the government was beaten at all points. The nation was fond of military glory, as hitherto: and multitudes enjoyed the spectacle and the news of the imposing departure of the Algerine expedition. But the political crisis had gone too far to be lost sight of. Finding this, the Ministry not only employed their whole power and influence in endeavouring to carry the elections, but actually instigated the King himself to canvass for votes in a proclamation, which was issued on the 14th of June, and which began with the words "The elections are about to take place throughout the kingdom. Listen to the voice of your King!" The voice of the King proceeds to extol the charter and the national institutions: but declares that, in order to make them available, the royal prerogative must remain unassailed. The concluding words are interesting as the last which this wretched sovereign addressed to his subjects. "Electors! hasten to the place of voting. Let not guilty negligence induce you to absent yourselves! Let one sentiment animate you—one banner be your rallying point! It is your King who requires this of you! it is a father who summons you.—Do your duty; and I will do mine."—Characteristic last words!

The government being beaten at all points, what was to be done next? Either the Ministry must resign, and open the way to a new course of policy, or they must choose one of two desperate methods of governing the country—dispensing with a parliament altogether, or setting aside the electoral laws, and ordaining new ones, in order to obtain an obedient chamber of deputies. The government newspapers put out feelers about these latter courses, or audaciously advocated them; but everybody supposed that the administration would not venture upon them, but would resign. Up to the 26th of July, however, there was no appearance of an intention to do anything but simply meet the new Chambers. The letters of summons to the Peers had been transmitted, and the Deputies were travelling towards Paris from all parts of the kingdom. They did not know—and the people along the roads, who were rejoicing in the capture of Algiers, little suspected—what was taking place between the Polignac Ministry and the King.

Up to the last moment, the proposed plan of the Ministry had been to bring forward in the Chambers a popular Budget, in which many and great economical reforms would be recommended. Then, they were to excite to the utmost the patriotic pride of the members about the Algerine victories: and they hoped that through the blaze of those glories, they might carry, almost unobserved, the restrictive laws of the press which they were resolved to obtain. Except their actual conduct, nothing could be more blind and foolish than this plan of procedure, nor more insulting to the French nation, who were thus to be treated like children—bribed to suffer restraint by the exhibition of a glittering toy.—Their actual conduct was, however, even worse.—Finding it out of the question to meet the Chambers, they still did not think of resigning, but addressed a memorial to the King, petitioning and recommending him to set aside the charter. They had their own sense of duty; and, mistaken—utterly foolish—as it was, they resolved to abide by it. They believed that the monarchical principle was now to be surrendered or snatched from destruction by a bold hand. They despised the cowardly suggestion of retiring from the contest, and (as they viewed the matter) deserting the King: so they remained

MINISTERS' ME-
MORIAL.

beside him, and urged him on to destruction. In ruining their King, and outraging his people, they never felt the smallest doubt that they were discharging a sublime duty. Whatever the King of England might think of this, the British Premier had shown that his sympathy could not go this length. His measures of the preceding year were a practical and most powerful protest against the policy which was unjustly supposed to be instigated, or at least countenanced by him, because a personal friend of his was responsible for it. Prince Polignac was known to be inaccessible to counsel. It is probable that if he had ever obtained any opinion at all from the Duke of Wellington, or had guided himself by the policy of England in her last great crisis, he would not have been the one to overthrow the monarchy of France. 1827—30.

The Ministers had discussed, in some of their meetings, a plan of three Ordinances, which, being issued by the King, might free the government at once from its two great difficulties—the press and the Chambers. These Ordinances were laid before the King in Council, on the 21st of July, together with a Memorial which explained their object and their necessity.—This Memorial declared that there was no provision in the charter for the protection of the periodical press, which had at all times been, from its very nature, nothing but an instrument of disorder and sedition; that it had established a despotism in the Chamber of Deputies, where every man who adhered to the side of order was sure to be insulted by the newspapers: that the Algerine expedition had been endangered by the disclosures and criticisms of the press: that the King's own words and sentiments had been disrespectfully discussed in the journals: that it was for his Majesty to say whether such conduct should go unpunished: that government and the press could not co-exist; and that the prolonged cry of indignation and terror from all parts of the kingdom against the journals of Paris showed which must give way.—So much for the press.—As for the other difficulty—the representation, the Ministers suggested that the right of government to provide for its own security existed before any laws, and, being founded in the nature of things, must overbear all laws: that the time had arrived for the assertion of this primary right: that all legal resources had been exhausted in vain; and that if the Ordinances proposed were not in accordance with the letter of the laws, they were with the spirit of the charter: and that the administration did not hesitate to recommend to the King the issuing of the accompanying Ordinances, convinced as they were that justice must always prevail.—Such was the Memorial which was published with the celebrated Ordinances of Charles X. and his Polignac Ministry.

*Annuaire, 1830,
p. 118.*

These Ordinances were three. By the first, the liberty of the periodical press was suspended:—no journals were to be issued but by the express authorization of government, which must be renewed every three months, and might be withdrawn at any time:—and all writings of less than twenty pages of print were to lie under the same conditions. By the second ordinance, the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, on the ground that means had been used, in various parts of the kingdom, to deceive and mislead the electors, during the late elections. By the third ordinance, means were taken to correct such abuses by setting aside those provisions of the Charter which were found inconvenient in their operation: by the power conferred on the King by the

*ISSUE OF THE ORDINANCES.
Annuaire, 1830,
p. 120.*

1827—30. Charter to consult the security of the state, he lessened the number of deputies, reduced their term of office, and altered their qualification, and the methods of election.

July 25th.

It is scarcely credible, even now, that any government of our day should have conceived of doing such things as these by the mere will of the sovereign: and the question arises how the government could have gone on thus far, administered by men who now showed themselves destitute of all idea of nationality, law, and the purposes of social organization. These three Ordinances, together with some subordinate articles, recalling to the Council some men odious to the people, were countersigned by the six ministers present in council, and kept profoundly secret till half an hour before midnight of the 25th of July, when they were communicated to the responsible editor of the *Moniteur* newspaper, for publication in the morning. So profoundly had the secret been kept, that neither the heads of the police nor the soldiery had the least idea that any extraordinary call was likely to be made upon their energies. The Ministers had not made the slightest preparation for any awkward reception of their measures. There is no evidence that, amidst all their complaints of popular disobedience and violence, they dreamed of resistance to the Ordinances. As for the public, though something of the sort had been predicted and vaguely expected, from the day of Polignac's accession to office, the amazement and dismay at last were as overwhelming as if no forebodings had been entertained.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 124.
July 26th.

PROTEST OF THE
JOURNALISTS.

The opposition journalists were the first to act on that memorable 26th of July. They obtained an opinion from the most eminent lawyers in Paris of the illegality of the Ordinances; and then assembled, to the number of forty-four, in the office of the *National*, to prepare the celebrated protest which first gave direction to the bewildered mind of Paris. By this protest, they proved the illegality of the Ordinances, declared their own intention of resisting them, and invited the Deputies to meet on the properly-appointed day—the 3rd of August. “The government,” said the protest, “has to-day forfeited that character of legality which makes obedience a duty. We, for our part, shall resist it. It is for the rest of the nation to determine how far its own resistance shall extend.” A legal sanction was given, in the course of the day, to such a method of proceeding as this by the decision of a magistrate, M. Belleyne, who authorized the printer of the *Journal of Commerce* to continue the issue of that paper provisionally, as long as the Ordinance of the 25th had not been promulgated according to the legal forms.

At the Exchange, the excitement was tremendous. Crowds assembled in all the avenues to it, long before the gates were opened: and then the hubbub was such as might have alarmed even Prince Polignac, if he had witnessed it: but his way was to see very little, and to believe nothing but what he saw. Every one wanted to sell, and nobody to buy: manufacturers declared that they should close their establishments, and dismiss their workmen: and the Exchange had not been seen in so stormy a state since the return of the Bourbons. Presently the stir and excitement had spread to the remotest corners of Paris; and in the theatres the usual occasions were found or made for expressing the popular opinion. The day passed over, however, without actual insurrection: and the Ministers agreed that the discontent would exhaust itself in harmless

murmurs ; that no struggle need be apprehended till the new elections should be entered upon ; and that they need not send police or soldiery into the streets, to disperse the groups which began to form there. Even the usual leave of absence, asked by some military officers, was granted as on ordinary days. Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, who commanded the troops, held a most difficult position. He had no warning whatever of what was going to be done, though the Ministry were as well aware as he was, that whole divisions of the soldiery were so full of popular sympathy as to be unreliable, in case of insurrection. As the event showed, there were only 6,000 on whom he could depend ; and of these nearly 2,000 were needed for the supply of the regular posts in Paris, and about the King's palace at St. Cloud : so that the General had but little more than 4,000 men wherewith to defend Paris, and put down revolt, if the citizens should be disposed to resist the overthrow of the Charter.

1827—30.

The most remarkable scene, on Tuesday the 27th, was the conflict between the police and the newspaper corps. The doors of the offices were closed, and the papers were thrown out of the windows as fast as they could be printed ; and the eager mob handed them, by tens of thousands, to every house, or to every reader who wished to see the famous Protest. The police, meantime, were standing before the doors, unable to effect an entrance, because nobody would give any aid. One blacksmith after another was brought to the spot, with his tools : but one after another folded his arms, and refused to force the locks. When half Paris had witnessed the scene, so damaging to the authority of the government, the doors were at last broken in, the manuscripts and books seized, the types thrown away, and the presses broken : a process which did not make the temper of the government more respected than its power had been. During this day the Tribunal of Commerce declared itself. The printer of the *Courrier Français* had been afraid to print the paper in violation of the Ordinance, and the editors sued him for breach of contract. The tribunal, by the voice of its president, Ganneron—a voice which sounded firm and clear amidst the first roar of the revolutionary storm—pronounced that the Ordinance, being contrary to the Charter, could not be binding on anyone, from his Majesty the King to the remotest of his subjects ; and that the printer must act in fulfilment of his contract within twenty-four hours.

July 27th.

DESTRUCTION OF
THE PRESS.

Before two o'clock, Marmont was posting his troops, and bodies of men were arming themselves from the gunsmiths' shops. Some thirty Deputies had met to consider whether or not they should assemble on the 3rd of August : and the police and soldiery drew round their place of meeting. They do not appear to have thought of anything but legal resistance as yet : but, in the midst of their consultation, a deputation came to them from the electors of Paris, to say that by the promulgation of the Ordinances, law was at an end, and that insurrection was the method open to the citizens, and that which they were prepared to adopt. The deputation declared that assemblages were beginning in the streets ; that they, the representatives of a multitude, like-minded with themselves, had cast themselves, "body and goods," into the enterprise : and that they now called upon the Deputies to sanction and guide their proceedings. Next came a body of young men, messengers from a large association resolved on an immediate struggle, who offered a guard to the assembled Deputies. These last could come to no

THIRTY DEPUTIES.

1827—30. immediate determination under these exciting visitations, with police and soldiers all about the neighbourhood, and shots multiplying in the streets, and at the very door. They appointed a place of meeting for the morrow, when some of them were to come prepared with a decisive Protest, which should be immediately considered, and issued when agreed upon. The Ministers met this afternoon at the Foreign Office; and though they knew everything that was going forward, saw with their own eyes the state of the streets and the armourers' shops, and had (Prince Polignac and M. de Montbel) been pelted with showers of stones, they could not yet perceive the seriousness of the occasion. They expected the people to become quiet, and talked of declaring Paris in a state of siege, as a threatening measure, and of bringing in troops from a distance, if matters were not right to-morrow morning. They had great faith in the power of soldiery against a mob; and thought little of the all-important circumstance that various bodies of the troops had shown disinclination to act against the citizens.

July 28th.
BARRICADES.

On Wednesday morning, the 28th, barricades were seen rising in all directions: paving-stones, powder, and lead, were carried into houses favourably placed for attacking troops in the streets: the court tradesmen, seeing that they were in danger of insult from their display of the royal arms, took them down; and this became the signal for pulling down the royal insignia everywhere, and dragging them through the mud. The Arsenal, the Artillery dépôt, and the powder-mills, were all emptied with extraordinary despatch, and every soldier or government servant who carried arms was disarmed, as soon as met. The Prefect of the Seine went at seven in the morning, to inform the Minister, that if the Hôtel de Ville were not properly guarded, he feared it would be entered, and a Provisional Council of the people be established therein: but the Minister still did not consider the matter serious; thought the people would be scared back to their homes when Paris should be declared in a state of siege; and drove off to attend a council at St. Cloud, where the King and royal family now were. When the magistrate returned from this interview, the Hôtel de Ville was in the hands of the people, who had turned out the guard of sixteen men, and were running up to the belfry, where they rang the tocsin, and hung out the tri-coloured flag, with crape for mourning; and the eloquent flag streamed to the wind, in the sight of all Paris. Presently there was another, streaming from the steeple of Notre Dame, whose great bell was kept tolling, to call the people to arms. Soon after this was accomplished, bodies of soldiery appeared, to guard the edifices which were already in the possession of the citizens. In the course of the morning, there were various encampments of troops in different parts of the city: but no one seems to have remembered that they would want food: for none was provided. Marshal Marmont now sent a letter and report to St. Cloud, to alarm the King, and assure him that it was necessary to yield immediately: that if measures of pacification were instantly offered, there might yet be time to save the royal dignity; but that to-morrow it would be too late. This letter is declared to have been mis sent or suppressed.

When the Ministers returned from St. Cloud, they assembled and remained at the Tuileries, believing that they should no longer be safe in their own houses, and that they ought to be on the spot, ready to hold council with

1827—30.

Marshal Marmont, who was now—Paris being in a state of siege—the head of the government. Almost as soon as they had arrived, a remarkable deputation was shown into the presence of Marshal Marmont. Five Deputies came, sent by the liberal members of their body, to propose a truce, for the saving of life, till communication could be had with the King. The Marshal appeared disposed for peace, on his own part, but declared that his orders were positive to enforce the decrees of the government. He offered to send a message to St. Cloud: and did so. He inquired if the Deputies had any objection to see Prince Polignac. They expressed themselves willing; and he went into an adjoining room. Returning almost immediately, he intimated that as nothing could be done till an answer arrived from St. Cloud, there would be no use in their seeing Prince Polignac. It was afterwards made known, that orders had been issued for the arrest of five or six of the leading liberal Deputies, some of whom were of this negotiating party: that the intended victims passed through the presence of the officers charged to arrest them; and that on their departure, Marshal Marmont countermanded the orders which could not now be executed without too much hazard.

The Marshal sent one of his aides-de-camp, Colonel Komierowski, to St. Cloud with a letter which related the mission of the Deputies, and referred the King to the bearer for an account of what was passing in Paris. It was four o'clock when the messenger left Paris. When he arrived at St. Cloud, the King was at cards, and some of the ladies were in the orangery, silently listening to the distant firing. They had all been informed by an officer of the royal suite of what was going on; but the King comforted himself with the thought that everybody always exaggerates dangers. The messenger did his duty well. He delivered the letter into the King's own hand, observing that an answer could not be given too speedily; that it was not the populace but the whole people that had risen. "It is a formidable revolt, is it?" inquired the King. "Sire," replied the soldier, "it is not a revolt: it is a revolution." The King desired him to retire, and return to his presence to receive his answer, when the letter should have been read: and at the end of twenty minutes of anxious waiting, he was called in. The Dauphin and the Duchess de Berri were present: and it was unchecked by them that the King gave the message which he chose to send to Marshal Marmont; a message so cold and cruel, as well as foolish, as to extinguish any lingering feelings of compassion for his loss of the sovereignty of France. His verbal message was that Marshal Marmont must hold on—"concentrate his forces, and act with the masses:"—that is, he was to put down the people by military force, at all events. It also signified the King's displeasure at the dispersion of the forces over Paris. The method prescribed was already impossible. The greater number of the soldiers had gone over to the people; those that remained were too few for the work; and they were hungry, weary, and distressed. At night, orders were sent in the quietest way possible, to such of them as were at the Hôtel de Ville, where fighting had been going on, without result, for many hours, to return to the Tuileries in the best way they could. Since the morning of the preceding day, there had been no issue of provisions to the soldiers: and now, when in a famished condition they reached the Tuileries at midnight, after fighting all day in a burning sun, there was neither food

MESSAGE TO THE
KING.

THE KING'S MES-
SAGE.

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Annuaire, 1830,
p. 155.MARSHAL MAR-
MONT.

nor drink for them. They were promised some at daybreak; but it was not to be got. The officers bought up from the bakers whatever bread they had; but it went a very little way. It was no wonder that it was found, next morning, that a large proportion of the troops of the line were not to be depended on.

There was little rest for anybody that night. The soldiers were murmuring; and their commander was in great anguish of mind, which caused a miserable irresolution in his purposes. He disapproved the Ordinances as much as any man in Paris, and had said so to M. Arago, the Monday before: but his professional duty constrained him—or he thought it did—to fire upon the citizens who had his sympathies in their enterprise. He was required to fulfil his professional duty under every kind of disadvantage. His troops were too few; and many of them untrustworthy: food and ammunition fell short: he lay under the displeasure of the King, and was not on good terms with the Ministers. Marshal Marmont was a wretched man that night.—All night, the tocsin rang, banishing sleep from the city. All night, the people were cutting down the trees of the Boulevards, and building up new barricades.—On the 29th, however, these were no longer wanted. The soldiers no longer came out against the people.—They were posted “in masses,” as the King desired, and the people must come up and attack them.

There was a good deal of fighting, in a desultory kind of way; but regiment after regiment unscrewed their bayonets, and joined the people; or at least withdrew from the struggle. Meantime, from early in the morning, a remarkable scene was going forward in the palace of the Tuileries.

SECOND CONFÉ-
RENCE.

The Peers had made no demonstration as a Chamber: but some of them had fought as private men on the side of the people. Early in the morning of the 29th, the Marquess de Semonville, who held a high office in the Chamber of Peers, went to the Tuileries, saw Marmont, who carried despair in his countenance, and requested from him an interview with Prince Polignac. The Marquess was accompanied by M. d'Argout: and their account of the interview has never been disputed.—The Marquess peremptorily requested Prince Polignac to withdraw the Ordinances, in order to stop the effusion of blood, and preserve Paris: or, at least, to resign. Prince Polignac replied, with cold politeness, that he had no power of his own to take either step, without consultation with the King. The other Ministers said the same thing: but their whole manner conveyed to the two peers the impression that they were “under the influence of a power greater than their own will:” that as they had tempted and urged on the King to this pass, he would not now let them draw back.—At length, Prince Polignac, with the same calm politeness, yielded so far as to propose to retire, to deliberate with his colleagues. While he was out of the room, the Marquess urged Marmont to arrest the Ministers, as the shortest way of putting an end to the slaughter in the streets; the Governor of the Tuileries offering to do the deed, and the Marquess himself proposing to go to St. Cloud, to work upon the King. Marmont was convulsed with agitation: he shed tears of indignation and passion, in the conflict between the convictions of his judgment and his professional duty: but he had yielded, and was about to sign the requisite orders, when Peyronnet came in, and said in a voice of great emotion, as he stood

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 159.

behind the Marquess, "What!—not gone yet?" The intention to yield was clear from the tone and manner of these few words. The Marshal wrote something different from what he had intended; he wrote a pressing intreaty to the King to give way. The Governor put the two peers instantly into a carriage for St. Cloud: Prince Polignac and some of his colleagues entered another: and the two carriages reached St. Cloud at the same time. Their arrival, and the disorder and agitation of their appearance created no little astonishment there; for even yet, the royal family insisted upon it that all their informants exaggerated the confusion. The King taunted the Marquess with this in the interview which ensued. 1827—30.

During that interview, the King was as obstinate as ever about the Ordinances and his "system" of government. It was only by presenting plainly to him his personal danger from the hands of the populace, and his responsibility for the lives and fortunes of his family, that the Marquess could make any impression upon him whatever. It was not a moment for scruples; and the Marquess therefore laid upon the King the sole responsibility for anything that might happen to his family through his refusal to yield. This at length brought tears to the old man's eyes: he drooped his head upon his breast, and said in a low and agitated voice, "I will request my son to write, and assemble the Council."

After a short deliberation, it was resolved that the Ordinances should be revoked, and a new ministry appointed: but, either from some difficulty about the new appointments, or from some lingering hope of better news, the decision was kept secret till the evening: and then it was too late. CONCESSION FROM THE KING.

The Ministers fairly gone, Marmont ordered the soldiers to act only on the defensive, and proclaimed a truce at various points: but he was not much attended to; and, in fact, not understood. In some places, the conflict raged more than ever; and elsewhere, more and more soldiers went over to the people. In the afternoon, the citizens had penetrated everywhere; and Marmont found himself suddenly compelled to leave the city, if he wished to preserve his force at all. He could not even give notice of his intention to several scattered companies, which he was obliged to leave to their fate. Most of them, however, made their way out, and joined him on the road to St. Cloud. His only hope now was to guard the person of the King, and the safety of the royal family.—On the road, the soldiers met the Dauphin, with two aides-de-camp. They formed in battalions to receive him. They supposed that he would address the troops, and invite them to follow him to Paris; but he only rode rapidly, and in dismal silence, along their front, and turned back towards St. Cloud, whither they followed him with heavy hearts. Their case was a hard one. Their good will towards the people and their cause was such, that they spared life to the utmost that was consistent with their military duty, while they were pelted with stones, and treated as enemies by the populace: and, at the same time, they had no encouragement on the side of their professional duty. Their wants were not cared for; they were not supported by an efficient command; nor were their spirits cheered by a single demonstration in favour of the royal cause. Throughout the whole struggle, not one solitary cry of "Long live the King!" was heard. And now, when all was over, and they were going to the presence of the King, the King's heir had not one RETREAT TO ST. CLOUD.

1827—30.

word of thanks or sympathy to address to them: but, on the contrary, he seemed to doubt whether they had done their duty. Some of them must have wished themselves with those of their comrades who had fallen—with the old grenadier, one of the heroes of Austerlitz, who fell mortally wounded this day by a ball from the musket of a citizen; fell, exclaiming, "I was a good Frenchman, however."

The troops, on their arrival at St. Cloud, were encamped in the avenues of the park: but still, no provision of food or comfort was made for them. Those who had their pay in their pockets bought of the bakers; the others were at last fed by requisitions on the nearest inhabitants. In the evening, Marmont delivered a sort of proclamation, in which he declared the revocation of the Ordinances, and the change of ministry. The soldiers cried "Long live the King!" and set about eating and reposing themselves. The Dauphin was indignant with the Marshal—called him traitor, ordered his arrest, and took his sword from him with his own hand: but the King checked these proceedings, made some kind of apology for them, and ordered the troops to be informed that he was satisfied with their conduct.

MARMONT'S RE-
CEPTION.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 135.

The courtiers were the most at a loss what to do. It was long before they could admit the idea of the popular victory: but when they did, they took their part with a primary view to their own security. Up to the night of the 29th, all had been brilliant, gay, and confident. Next day, there was an eager looking out for news: but when, all day long, nobody entered the park, no deputations, no messengers, no newsbearers, the silence of consternation settled down on the palace of St. Cloud. Then, one by one, the carriages rolled away—attendance slackened—manners became cold and careless; and, in a few hours, the great house appeared nearly empty. Only a few general officers and gentlemen-in-waiting remained—except, indeed, the disgraced ministers. The King could not bear this; and he did not know whether he was safe at St. Cloud: so, at three in the morning of the last day of July, he set off for Trianon (another country palace), with his whole family and establishment, except the Dauphin and his attendants, who remained with the troops. The soldiers were naturally discouraged at this; and some returned to Paris without asking leave.

WANDERING OF
THE ROYAL
FAMILY.

The unhappy King could not rest. He went from place to place, seeing the hated tricolour everywhere along the road, and forsaken by more and more of his guard of soldiers, who could not endure being thus dragged about before the eyes of the victorious people. His displaced ministers dropped off, except Polignac, who remained some days in the suite of his sovereign, but concealing himself from observation. That night—the night of the 1st of August—the King believed that all was lost for himself; for he heard that the Duke of Orleans had accepted the office of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom: but there might be a hope that the crown might be preserved for his grandson, the posthumous child of the Duke de Berri: and, in his favour, the King that night abdicated; and the Dauphin resigned his pretensions to the throne. Again they had to learn that it was too late. The only notice taken was by sending commissioners from Paris to advise the departure of the whole royal family for Cherbourg, whence they were to leave the kingdom; and to require the delivery of the crown jewels. It was impossible to resist. The jewels

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were delivered up; the last orders to the troops were issued while the Chambers met in Paris, according to the King's first appointment, and in defiance of his subsequent decree of dissolution. The last orders to the troops were to repair to Paris, after having seen the royal family depart; and to submit themselves to whatever authority they might find supreme in the capital. On the morning of the 4th, the poor King affected to give the order for departure, though the commissioners remained to accompany him to the coast, and were, in fact, the masters. As he passed between the ranks of his soldiers, and among the flags under which they were to fight no more, tears were in his eyes, and in theirs; and these tears seem to have been the only mark of regret that he met with during the whole process of his dethronement. The royal party moved as slowly as possible towards the coast. They lingered—they courted sympathy—they looked in every face they met for comfort: but there was no comfort for them; for they had not deserved it. They had done nothing to secure either the respect or affection of the nation: and they now met with nothing but indifference or mere compassion. No one injured them: no one insulted them: no one withheld the observances of ordinary civility; but it was impossible for them not to see that no one cared for them. For the children, indeed, some emotion was shown—banished as they were from their birthright before they were old enough to know what they had lost.

When the train arrived on the heights above Cherbourg, the spectacle that met the eyes of the travellers was very affecting. The vessels in the harbour carried the tricolour—all but two;—two ships in the distance, whose sails were hung out, and all evidently ready for immediate departure. These were American vessels, engaged to carry the royal family into exile. The travelling party drove through the town without stopping, and immediately went on board the *Great Britain*, the soldiers on the quay presenting arms, and their officers saluting in grave silence, as the exiles passed. Captain Dumont d'Urville (who afterwards perished by fire in the dreadful railway accident near Versailles), waited on the King, to inquire whither he should have the honour of escorting him. "To Spithead," was the reply.

DEPARTURE FROM
FRANCE.

The pilot who took them out of port related, on his return, that as the unhappy family saw the shores of France grow dim and dimmer in the distance, their sobs and lamentations became more and more irrepressible. The King alone preserved his calmness. In twenty-four hours from their sailing, that is, before three o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th of August, the vessels anchored at Spithead. Two of the King's suite were put on shore, in order to proceed to London, to learn the pleasure of the King and Ministry of England. As it was reported to the exiles that the people of Portsmouth, in their joy at the emancipation of France, meant to hang out the tricolour all over the harbour, the vessels were removed from their first station, and moored off Cowes, in the Isle of Wight.

The English Ministers had to consult the foreign ambassadors; and it was two days before their answer arrived. The decision was that Charles X. should be received—but as a private individual; under which character he thenceforth bore the title of the Count de Ponthieu. From this time till October the exiles lived at Lulworth in Dorsetshire: but there were reasons—some assigned and more supposed—why they should be recommended to

RECEPTION IN
ENGLAND.

1827—30. reside further from the coast, and in a place less immediately accessible from France. George IV. offered for their use the palace of Holyrood, where the ex-King had resided during his former exile. There the family lived in retirement, occupied with the education and prospects of the young king, Henry V., as they called him. The dethroned Sovereign had nothing to suffer from remorse, or even misgiving. He never ceased to believe and say that the Ordinances were necessary; that the revolution would have happened exactly as it did if he had never issued them; and that the French nation had misrepresented his intentions.

CONDUCT OF THE
REVOLUTION.

What the French nation did next we shall see hereafter. The conduct of the people during the Three Days was singularly noble. No deed of meanness, and scarcely one of violence, is reported, at a time when public opinion was the only law. The historical education of the French people may not have fitted them for the full understanding and enjoyment of combined liberty and order; but of the strength at once of their patriotism and self-command, in an hour of crisis, no doubt remained in any mind in Europe, after the spectacle of the Three Days.

FATE OF THE MI-
NISTERS.

As for the late ministers, they were tried by special commission. Prince Polignac was arrested on the night of the 16th of August, when he was on the point of escaping to Jersey. He preserved his calmness throughout, sending in to the government a letter of extraordinary confidence, in which he demanded his freedom, and permission to retire with his family to the tranquillity of the domestic hearth, at home or abroad. It, however, his detention should be decided upon, he requested that his place of imprisonment might be the fortress of Ham, where he had undergone a long captivity in his youth. His life and the lives of his colleagues were spared. They were sentenced to imprisonment for life (Polignac and Peyronnet & Ham); to confiscation of all their goods, and outlawry—to a condition, in short, of civil death.

Annuaire, 1830,
p. 166 (note).

The loss of life during the Three Days was much less than could have been expected, and than was believed at the time by those engaged. On the side of the troops, the loss is estimated at about 250 killed and 500 wounded. On the popular side the numbers are more certainly known. The killed were 788; and the wounded 4,500.

DUKE OF BRUNSWICK.

While the state of France, viewed in connection with politics at home, was disturbing the mind of the sick King of England, he had to bear a series of vexations on a personal matter, in which he was really ill-used. Among the killed at Waterloo was the Duke of Brunswick, whose young heir was left to the guardianship of the King of Hanover. The boy turned out ill; and there was no end to the trouble he gave to his guardian. He concluded by publishing libels against George IV. which positively asserted charges too serious to be allowed to pass; as, for instance, that he, the Duke, had been excluded from his rights for long after he came of age. Though the incessant brawls and disgraces of the young man showed the world that he was not worth attending to, it was necessary to put some check upon him: and his refusal to recognise certain political acts of his guardian—liberal changes which were valued by his subjects—rendered some interposition necessary. He must also be rebuked for having sent a challenge to the Hanoverian Minister

Count Munster. The Courts of Vienna and Berlin tried to bring the young man to reason and penitence, to avoid the serious disgrace of a virtual trial before the Diet: but he would not yield. An appeal was therefore made to the Diet, by both the subjects and the guardian of the Duke. The affair was gone into, and judgment given against the Duke on every point. He was enjoined to fulfil the pledges given to his subjects, and to make apology and reparation to his guardian. But he paid no attention to the judgment: made no apology,—withdrew no libels,—made no advances towards his subjects. Such was the state of things in 1829. During the revolutions of the next year, occasion was taken to settle his affairs. He was deposed, by universal consent, and his younger brother put in his place. Of course he complained loudly and long; but his unfitness for power was so evident that no one aided him, and everybody advised him to be quiet. The judgment of the Diet relieved George IV. from all apprehension for his reputation as the Duke's guardian: but the affair was one of the annoyances which embittered the close of his life, and which he had no longer strength of body or mind to bear cheerfully.

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Annual Register,
1829, p. 202.

The Pope Leo XII. died in February of this year, 1829. His reign had been short,—only five years and a half: and it had not been distinguished by any remarkable events, or indications of character or ability in himself. His tendencies were despotic; but he had not force of mind to withstand the liberalizing influences of the time: so he indulged his predilections merely by increasing the number and aggrandizing the condition of his clergy. The King of the Netherlands forbade him to meddle in the management of the Catholic ecclesiastical seminaries of that kingdom: and he yielded. The French nation vexed him sadly by retrenching the power of the Jesuits in France: but he yielded. And now, at the age of sixty-nine, he laid down his predilections and his vexations together in the grave. His successor had as much reason as himself to feel how times were changed for popes. The new Pope, Cardinal Castiglione, took the title of Pius VIII. One of his first acts was excommunicating the town of Imola, which lay under his displeasure. But neither the inhabitants of Imola, nor anybody else, seemed to be at all aware of the inflection; and the affairs of that town and of the world went on as before. Times were indeed changed for popes: but it seems as if popes were not changed. Pius VIII. excepted from the amnesty usually published on the accession of a pope all political offenders, declaring such to be of the nature of assassins, undeserving of the mercy of even the compassionate church. Thus the new pontiff did not enter upon his reign altogether in the spirit of the gospel, of which he professed to be the High Priest.

DEATH OF THE
POPE.

Annual Register,
1829, p. 199.
Accession of Pius
VIII.

The war between Russia and Turkey was soon over. The Russian army swept all before it; and when it had come like a hurricane down the Danube, and was seen descending the southern slopes of the Balkan, there was nothing more to be done but to obtain the best terms for the Porte that the conqueror would grant. On the 20th of August, the Russian general, Diebitsch, took Adrianople, the second city of the empire, without firing a shot, so utterly confounded were the 80,000 inhabitants by the speed of his approach. On the Black Sea the Russians were unopposed; and every post yielded to them. It now only remained to take Constantinople. Up to this time the Porte had

RUSSIA AND
TURKEY.

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refused all negotiation and offers of mediation. It was a religious war; and if the Christians were permitted to mediate, all the infidel subjects of the Porte would rise in rebellion, and the true faith would succumb. This was the answer given to, or allowed to be inferred by, the ambassadors of France, England, and Prussia, who had returned to Constantinople in June. But when the Russians were in full march on the capital, and the sacred flag itself did not raise enough of the Faithful to daunt the foe, the gallant rulers of Turkey yielded to necessity, and sent two plenipotentiaries to Adrianople, to treat with the Russian general. The terms granted appeared at first sight very liberal: but Russia obtained what she most desired—money in abundance, and a protracted hold upon the country. Besides the indemnity to Russian merchants, amounting to about £800,000, Turkey was to pay the expenses of the war, in ten yearly instalments of half a million sterling each. During these ten years, the Turks were not to be rid of the Russian presence. On the payment of the first instalment, the Russians were to evacuate Adrianople: on the second, to retire beyond the Balkan: on the third, to quit the Danube; and so on: but they were not to evacuate the Turkish dominions till the payments were all made, and the ten years expired. As for the question of territory, Russia left to the Porte more than might have been expected, retaining some portions here and there which would be useful auxiliaries to future conquests. It was a galling thing, however, that the whole of the left bank of the Danube was gone, and that no Mohammedan might possess a foot of land, or even reside there: and yet more, that the methods of administration set up by the Russians in the provinces were to remain: and worse still, that no Russian in any part of the Turkish dominions, was to be subject to any government but his own. Henceforth the Russians might come and go, and conduct themselves as they pleased, with or without the connivance of the authorities at home, and they could be controlled only by means of their own ambassador and consuls, whose predilections would naturally be on the side of their countrymen. The truth was, all was now over with Turkey; and her political existence was henceforth nothing but a mere show, granted to the solicitations of the Three Powers, which deprecated her open destruction.

Annual Register,
1829, pp. 221, 222.

SETTLEMENT OF
GREECE.

Of course, Turkey was in no condition to refuse any terms which might be proposed to her in regard to Greece. The Turks in Greece not being reinforced, had yielded almost everywhere to the arms of the Greeks and their allies; and the Three Powers might now fix the boundaries of Greece, and arrange its affairs as they would. This had been begun in a protocol prepared by the Three Powers in March; but the President of Greece, Capo d'Istria, objected to it. The National Assembly, which he convoked at Argos, on the 23rd of July, was composed mainly of his partisans; and they occupied their time till the 18th of August chiefly in uttering sentiments on peace, and in compliments to the President. By that date, however, the Three Powers were transacting the business of Greece more effectually at Constantinople, where Russia forced upon the Turkish government the acceptance of the protocol of March. To prevent Russia having too much influence, however, in the disposal of Greek affairs, the conferences on the subject were, by agreement of the Three Powers, now to be carried on in London, where, from this time,

neither the Turkish government, nor the President of Greece, had any part in the deliberations. The Three Powers, seeing the helplessness of the other parties concerned, took the matter into their own hands, somewhat unceremoniously, offering some compensation to Turkey, by proposing a narrower boundary for Greece than that assigned in the March protocol. 1827—30.

It was presently determined that Greece should be wholly released from Turkish rule; and that the powers which had thus created a new state should appoint its form of government. The monarchical form having been chosen, as of course, the next question was, who should be its king. In order to avoid jealousies, all princes connected with the courts of the Three Powers were excluded. The first to whom the new crown was offered was Prince John of Saxony. He declined it. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, the widower of our Princess Charlotte, and at this day King of the Belgians, was supposed at the time to be eager for the sovereignty of Greece; and to him it was offered, in January, 1830, by the representatives of England, Russia, and France. Ann. Reg. 1830, p. 300.

The negotiators were rather surprised by the Prince's method of proceeding. He had no idea of an unconditional acceptance or rejection; and, believing the possession of Candia to be essential to the security of the sovereignty of Greece, he asked for Candia. There were other stipulations, too; and the offerers of the Crown found themselves still involved in negotiations, when they had believed that they had only to confer a dignity. There was good will on both sides, however; and by the month of April it was understood by all parties that Prince Leopold had accepted the Crown of Greece. The Prince, himself, however, did not consider his acceptance to be beyond recall; for on the 21st of May he finally and conclusively declined the Crown of Greece.

Various reasons for this conclusion have been assigned. One which is most generally agreed upon is, that the President of Greece had frightened him from his enterprise. Prince Leopold had written to Capo d'Istria on the 28th of February, to announce his prospects and intentions, and to address his future subjects through their present ruler. The reply of the President, and the report of the proceedings of the senate at Napoli, which reached the Prince in May, and have been made public, certainly leave no ground of surprise that any rational man should decline a task so hopeless as that of governing Greece, while her internal state and foreign dangers were what they were thus shown to be. For the Prince's reasons for drawing back, there is no need to look beyond the fact that the senate refused to accept the arrangements of the Three Powers, in regard to so important a matter as the boundaries of the state. But other causes might easily be, and were alleged. By that month of May, it had become clear that George IV. was dying; and Prince Leopold, the uncle of the young Princess who was to succeed the next aged and feeble heir to the throne, might, as brother to the Regent Duchess of Kent, be a personage of great political consequence, in case of the Princess coming to the throne before she was of age. Again, there is no need to go so far as this for the Prince's reasons. There was perhaps scarcely a child in England who, hearing anything of the matter at all, did not feel an uneasy sense of the vulgarity of a new crown, manufactured

Hansard, xxiv.
1005.

1827—30.

by statesmen in a cabinet. Children, and all unsophisticated people, feel the vulgarity of new rank, and of the lowest dignity in an assemblage of high ranks. Every one understands that it may be better to be of high station among commoners than a new comer into the lowest order of the peerage. If it is so with the common dignities of society, how much stronger must the feeling be about that highest position whose main dignity is derived from associations of antiquity! But for historical associations, a crown has, in our age, absolutely nothing in it at all. If conferred by the united impulse of a nation, the honour of sovereignty is still the highest conceivable: but such a position is, in the present age of the world, one of leadership—one of personal responsibility, which is only impaired by reference to hereditary associations. There may have been reasons of policy for placing a crown on the apex of the destinies of Greece; but, whatever might be the tastes of the parties most nearly concerned, it is certain that the tastes of western Europe were offended by the act of turning a venerable symbol into a politic bauble. And it is very conceivable that though a sensible man might, in the hope of usefulness and true honour, get over his objection to the insignia of his new office, it is no wonder that, upon the hope of usefulness and true honour being reduced to painful doubt, he should give way to his disgust, and decline the office and its titles and decorations together.

It was not till two years after this time, not till the year 1832 was far advanced, that the Three Powers could procure the acceptance of the Crown of Greece by an European Prince: and then the new sovereign was a mere boy. Otho, a younger son of the King of Bavaria, with nearly three years of his minority yet to run, went to Greece, as King, in December, 1833, with little chance of composing its dissensions, and affirming his empire. The only thing that can be said is, that where a boy must fail, the ablest man might have succeeded no better.

CHAPTER X.

THE year 1830 opened gloomily—not only in England, but throughout Europe, and even in America. In Russia, great efforts were made to raise subscriptions to feed the labouring classes who were suffering under the depression of agriculture, from bad seasons and other causes. Throughout the whole of Germany and Switzerland there were stirrings of discontent, which gave warning of revolutionary movements to follow. In the rural districts of the north of France that strange madness of rick-burning, which afterwards spread fearfully in England, had begun. The educated classes of England spoke of it at first with contemptuous amazement, as showing the desperate ignorance of the rural population of France; not yet dreaming how soon the proof would be brought home to them that our own agricultural labourers were in a similar condition of savagery. In the United States the pressure upon the least opulent class was extreme; and that prosperous country came to the knowledge of real and extensive distress. At home, the distress was so fearful, that even the sanguine Duke of Wellington, with all his slowness to see the dark side in politics, and all his unwillingness to depress his valetudinarian Sovereign, felt himself obliged to take emphatic notice of it in the royal speech; and the debates on the Address, which were keen and protracted in both Houses, turned chiefly on the dispute whether the distress, which all admitted to be intolerable, was pervading or partial. The Duke maintained that there were some parts of the kingdom where the distress was not pressing: the Opposition maintained that there were none. The Duke spoke of the ranges of new houses that were rising in the neighbourhood of most of the large towns, and declared that he had heard of no complaints on the part of the retail traders; while his opponents looked upon these ranges of new houses as monuments of the speculative mania of five years before; declared that they stood empty, or that their inhabitants were pining with hunger within the walls, unable to pay rent, and allowed to remain only because the owners knew that they could get no other tenants, and it was better for new houses to be inhabited than left empty. The interest of money was never known to be lower; and the manufacturers' stocks, with which their shelves were too well loaded, had suffered a depreciation of 40 per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, we find, spoke this session of topics of "consolation," and no longer of "congratulation:" and one subject of earnest deliberation with the Ministers was whether they should propose a property-tax. They resolved against it; but the deliberation indicates the pressure of the time. The restless spirits of the mercantile and political world, who, in seasons of distress, want to be doing something for immediate relief, turned now, as usual, to the ready device of an issue of paper money. This was urgently demanded, not only by many half-informed people throughout the country,

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but by some who should at least have known that they had better not speak on this subject unless they understood it. This idea—of an issue of paper money—seems to have lain under the opposition to the Address in both Houses, and to have been the real drift of the amendments proposed. And yet money was abundant throughout this period of distress; and, as has been said, the interest of money never was lower.

STATE OF THE
KING.

The national discontent with the government was very great: and the discontent of the government with itself was hardly less. The continuance of the administration would not have been permitted for a day or an hour after the meeting of parliament, but for one consideration—the understood state of the King. And some members of the administration would not have borne the galling yoke of their military chief's authority, if they could, with any honour or humanity, have left him, or known what to do with themselves when free.

The state of things was understood to be this. The King, always selfish and swayed by his passions, had been an occasion of incessant difficulty to his Ministers since the failure of his prosecution of the Queen. The sense of weakness and loss of self-respect consequent on that failure had added distrust of his servants to all the evil tempers which existed in him before. His caprices became incalculable. Like all jealous and suspicious people, he was fond of having little plots of his own—sly ways of putting his ministers to the proof, or disconcerting and spiting them; so that, between this jealousy and his constitutional infirmity of purpose, matters had now come to such a pass that his decisions and commands were worth nothing. He changed his orders between night and morning; and held contradictory opinions or notions from day to day. It had become necessary to rule him first, in order to rule the country. By some means or other, he must be held to his pledges, and brought back to declared opinions, and supported in the enforcement of his orders. The Duke of Wellington could do this better than any one else. At least, it was certain that if he failed, no one else could succeed. The times were too grave for any trifling—for any ungenerous driving on of party objects. Nothing would have been easier than to turn out the Wellington Ministry any day; and nothing could be harder than it was to some of the subordinates of the Premier to remain under his humiliating rule: but then no other government was possible in the existing state of affairs; and the consequences of leaving the King and country without a Ministry were too fearful to be braved by the hardiest. All were aware, too, that there must be a change before long, and every one was disposed to put off all struggles of parties till the fair opportunity of a new reign.

DUKE OF WEL-
LINGTON.

Rarely has a Minister held a more lonely position than the Duke of Wellington did at this date. He had no party, no colleagues, no support of any kind—unless it were that questionable support of which the country heard much at the time—of fashion in London drawing-rooms. There could hardly have been so many reports prevalent, and we could hardly meet with so many allusions to this kind of support in the records of the time, if there had not been some truth in the allegation that the Duke was the fashion among the ladies in the higher circles in London, and that these talking ladies did no good to their hero, nor added any security to the chances of the perilous time

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by their exaltation of the despot of the day. Just as the Court ladies of Charles X. were praising the vigour of Prince Polignac, the great ladies in London were praising the Duke of Wellington: and probably the consternation of the English ladies at what they saw before the year was out was nearly as great as that of the French ladies when they beheld their idol consigned to prison and civil death. Happily, however, the cases presented no further parallel. If Paris is France, London is not England: and England possesses a parliament with which no Minister dreams of meddling, and a press which, as the Duke of Wellington found by an experience less disastrous than that of his friend Polignac, cannot be assailed with impunity.

First, for the parliament—that is, the House of Commons—at this time. STATE OF PARTIES. The Opposition consisted of Three parties, while the Ministerial party was nothing. Mr. Peel was the only Minister whom anybody saw or thought of in the Lower House; and his only natural and organized supporters were those who, under the name of adherents of the Ministry, have no opinions, or are never asked for any, and therefore afford no particular credit to a government. Mr. Peel was observed with intense interest, and spared or supported MR. PEELE. by a generous admiration and sympathy, which graced the time, but could not long have put off the struggle of parliamentary conflict. The Premier and he had carried the Catholic question in the best possible manner and temper that the circumstances admitted. Mr. Peel's sacrifices were universally respected; his sincerity universally confided in, thus far; and his present difficult position generously considered. He stood in fact the supporter and administrator of liberal principles; and in order to be fraternized with by the leaders of the liberal Opposition, it was only necessary that he should also profess those principles which he was actually working out. For this he was evidently not yet ready. His heart could not yet be with those whom he had regarded as antagonists during his whole political life:—his heart was naturally still with the allies, with whom he had lived and worked and fought till now. This was easily comprehended: and it was known that he had suffered much in his private and public relations on account of his recent political conduct; and that he must suffer under the stern rule of his chief; and that he must have his share of difficulty in the relations of the Cabinet with the King; and therefore was he observed with intense interest—and time was given him—and he was spared or supported by a generous admiration and sympathy. Mr. Canning had specially exempted him from censure for the secession which he complained of in every other case:—the liberals exempted him from the mockery and censure with which they visited his comrades in conversion on the Catholic question: and now, the liberal section of the Opposition exempted him from the censure with which they visited the other managers of a perplexed and almost profitless session—a session marked at the time as that which had exhibited most talk and least work of any since the Conquest.

The Premier's view of the Opposition was, without disguise, one which did not secure him any indulgence from it. The bulk of the Opposition was the liberal party, now strengthened and graced by an abundance of parliamentary talent, while its weakness of administrative ability, was, of course, not yet shown; and animated by victory, hope, and expectation. Another powerful

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though small party, in opposition, was that of the "Canningites," led by Mr. Huskisson in these his last days. The old Tories made up the third party—not a very numerous one, but strong in the energies of grief, disappointment, and fear. The Duke's tactics were well understood. He expected to hold his position by playing off these parties against each other. He did not see, as others did, that the causes of their disunion had mainly disappeared, while amidst the heavings of this volcanic time, new ground had arisen on which they might stand together, and look abroad upon the agitations of the political sea. The Duke was blind to this, because he was not yet aware of the critical character of the times. He had seen the dangers of Ireland, and shown that he could yield to necessity, and do what was required. But he did not comprehend the state of France, nor entertain the least doubt that his friend Polignac would conquer there: and he was to speak a few words, the next November, which should show the existing generation and a remote posterity that the needs and destinies of England were no clearer to him than, as he should by that time have learned, were now those of France.

As for the union which was possible and probable between these three opposition parties—an union more probable at present than any practical antagonism—it must be remembered that a touchstone of political integrity had been applied universally in the Catholic Emancipation measure. It was now clear which men had opinions and could hold to them. No one could be present at the debates of this session, and not see that a new feeling of mutual respect had grown up between the prominent men who had for life advocated and for life opposed Catholic Emancipation. The dignity of irresistible victory belonged to the one set; and the dignity of adherence to conviction under the new adversity of opposition belonged to the other: and the mutual recognition attracted both to a cordial co-operation on questions on which they happened to agree. Then again, the Huskisson party was strongly united with the Tories on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and with the liberals on that of Free Trade. And a clear understanding could not but exist among all the three in regard to the Wellington administration—that it could not, and must not continue long; and that the utmost care and delicacy were necessary to support it as long as it was necessary, and to displace it in the least perilous time and manner. It is the belief of many that the Premier was slow in becoming aware that he held office by the mercy of the Opposition which he had expected to manage and control. It is certain that his experience with regard to Irish questions had not yet humbled him enough; and that the coming year was one of most painful discipline to him. He was first to learn in the spring, however slow he might be in receiving the lesson, that his government was in itself quite powerless: and next, in the summer, how France spurned the government which had not beforehand seemed to him monstrous; and in the autumn—but that lesson shall be revealed in its own time. In the long life of the Duke of Wellington, perhaps no one year has taught him so much political truth, under a regimen of such severe discipline, as the year 1830.

He began the year with a course of action so weak and blind as really helped to justify the popular belief in France, and in some quarters at home, that he and Prince Polignac were, if not in league, at least actuated by strong sympathy. He began the year with a war, on his own account, against the press.

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PRESS PROSECUTIONS.

Perhaps no act of the Duke of Wellington's has ever injured him so much as this. It instantly lessened his power, and wholly altered the popular estimate of his character. Much of his power was derived from the impression, till then universal, that his self-reliance was not only indomitable, but so lofty as to be beyond the reach of foolish or malignant censure. Some persons had been rather surprised at his condescending to quarrel with Lord Winchilsea's random assertions; but now, when he directed the Attorney-General to prosecute the *Morning Journal* for libels against the King, the government, and himself individually, people looked at one another, and asked whether this could be the man who was supposed to have the world under his feet. The libels complained of were very abusive; but they were, for the most part, extremely vague. One allegation of corruption, supposed to refer to the Lord Chancellor, was distinct: and it might, perhaps, be necessary to the reputation of a judge to rebut it: but, when the Lord Chancellor proceeded to prosecute on his own account, the editor of the paper made an affidavit that the charge did not refer to the Lord Chancellor. Upon this, the government pursued the charge, instituting a new prosecution for the same libel, as affecting some one member of the government, whoever he might be; and this proceeding, taking place after the defendant had disclosed his line of defence, was universally regarded as harsh and vindictive. But it was reasonable in comparison with the other prosecutions, which were for such vague charges as "treachery, cowardice, and artifice," and such gossip as that the King had been observed to look coldly on the Duke of Wellington, and giving hints of the reasons why the King did not appear in public. It was no small humiliation to the Duke that he had to be reminded by the verdict of the jury on the second of the three trials, that the time succeeding the passage of the Catholic Relief bills was one of extreme excitement, when some allowance should be made for vehemence of temper, and intemperance of language. The Prime Minister, who best knew the opposition of men's minds, should have been the first to make this allowance, and that he did not, materially damaged his reputation. The private chaplain of the Duke of Cumberland avowed himself the author of some of the libels; yet the printer and publisher were pursued for them. The Duke's plea was, that such publications prevented the public excitement from subsiding; but there could be no doubt of the irritation being greatly aggravated by the prosecutions themselves. The Whig Attorney-General, who remained in the ministry on the ground of the government being conducted on Whig principles, never recovered the ground he lost in the national esteem, by these prosecutions. Mr. Scarlett after this obtained dignities, office, and title; but he was always felt to be a fallen man. Some contemporaries ascribed the whole proceeding to his, as others did to Prince Polignac's influence over the mind of the Duke of Wellington. The *Examiner* of that date says of the proceeding, "This may be hypochondria, or it may be Scarlett; for surely it cannot be intended to countenance the measures of Prince Polignac, and to persecute the press with a view to preserving conformity of councils. The coincidence is, at least, curious." Under any supposition—whether the Duke was spontaneously despot, or whether he was wrought upon by Prince Polignac on the one hand, or Mr. Scarlett on the other—the reputation of the ministry, and especially of the Premier, was deeply injured by these conflicts with the press. The

England's Seven
Administrations,
vol. ii. p. 27.

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Annual Register,
1830, p. 5.
KING'S SPEECH.
Hansard, xxii. 1.

editor of the *Morning Journal* and one of the proprietors were punished by fine and imprisonment.

The King's speech, delivered by commission on the 4th of February, announced the peace concluded between Russia and Turkey; the continuance of the Portuguese quarrel; the distress among the agricultural and manufacturing classes at home, and the hope of the government that considerable reductions of expenditure might take place, without injury to the public service. The subject of improvements in the administration of the law was also recommended to the consideration of parliament; and measures were announced to answer this object, and prepare for a revision of the practice and proceedings of the superior courts.

REDUCTIONS.

Before the Ministers could announce their plans of retrenchment, they formally pledged themselves to the principle and practice, to be pursued without hesitation or delay. Only a week after the opening of parliament, Sir James Graham brought forward a motion for a general reduction of the salaries of official persons, on the ground of the restoration of the value of money by Mr. Peel's bill of 1819. This motion was withdrawn in favour of a resolution proposed by Mr. Dawson, Secretary to the Treasury, urging, in the form of an address to the King, reduction of the persons employed in the departments of civil government, and of their salaries. Mr. Hume's motion for a Committee of Economical Inquiry was also withdrawn, that the Ministers might be left free to produce their plan. They did this on the 19th of February.

Such reductions as were now to be proposed almost always disappoint the popular expectation, because they must necessarily bear a very small proportion to the vast expenditure of a country ancient enough in its form of government and society to inherit the consequences of old financial errors, and to lie under heavy obligations of good faith. Not only ignorant demagogues in remote districts of the country, but some members of the House who should understand the history of British Finance better than they do, point to the large amount of annual expenditure and then to the small proposals of reduction, and scoff at the administration of the day—taking no pains to separate the expenditure of the administration of the day from that to which the present generation is bound by the pledges of a former one. On the present occasion, there was less of this method of complaint than usual—leading members in each section of Opposition making haste to declare that the reductions proposed went beyond their expectations. The reductions amounted altogether to £1,300,000; a large sum out of the £12,000,000 from which alone they could be deducted; but not an amount whose remission would be any effectual relief to the country. All who knew best, in each party, agreed that nothing further could at present be done in the departments of the army and navy; a conclusion which was not, however, allowed to pass without some severe taunting of the Ministers about the state of Ireland, which would not yet admit of any diminution of the military force stationed there. It had been concluded too hastily some months before that the pacification of Ireland would follow upon the relief of the Catholics; and now, Mr. Peel's mention of "the two great hostile parties in Ireland" was received with ironical congratulations by those who did not see that the disturbed state of Ireland was

owing to the long delay of the measure of Emancipation, which had exasperated the passions of parties to an indomitable point. 1830.

The duties removed were those on Beer, Cider, and Leather, by which the direct relief to the people was calculated at £3,400,000; and the indirect at so much more as would justify an estimate of £5,000,000 for the whole boon. A prospect was held out of reducing the interest on some portions of the National Debt; and a searching examination was going forward in every department of government, into the minutest divisions of the public expenditure.—This session gave the most important financial relief to the nation of any since the Peace; and the acknowledgments of this by the liberal members of Opposition were full and gracious. Mr. Baring regretted that the project of annually paying off a portion of the principal of the National Debt was surrendered for the sake of present relief: but most people thought that the fact of a deficit was hint enough to attend first to the immediate pressure upon the people.—The repeal of the Beer duty met with great opposition from the landed interest in the House, who would have preferred a repeal of the Malt tax; and from the agitation of the brewers and publicans who were alarmed at the idea of cheap beer, and of the throwing open of the trade which was proposed to take place at the same time. But the measures suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were all carried.

REMOVAL OF
DUTIES.

The Government had promised, at the close of the preceding session, that a Committee of Parliament should be appointed this year to consider the whole subject of the jurisdiction and Charter of the East India Company, as that Charter was soon to expire. A Committee was accordingly appointed this spring, the vast importance of its duties being emphatically indicated by Mr. Peel. The subjects of the Company had been computed to amount to ninety millions; and the welfare of millions more was implicated with theirs:—it was therefore impossible to overrate the seriousness of the inquiry whether the territorial and commercial powers of the Company should be continued; and if continued, on what understanding and what terms. The Company had kept silence as to their own desires and intentions; the Government had no propositions to make, or opinions to express: and the Committee entered upon its work with every possible appearance of impartiality, and security for it. There was some remonstrance, here and there, about the appointment of three or four India Directors to serve on the Committee: but the objection gave way before the need that was felt of their information on the affairs of India and of the Company. The result of the investigations of this Committee will appear hereafter.

EAST INDIA COM-
MITTEE.

The Speech had referred to proposed improvements in the administration of the law. One great improvement which took place this session—an incident so remarkable as to deserve special mention—was the removal of an unjust judge. The Crown was addressed by both Houses of Parliament, praying for the removal of the Judge of the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland—Sir Jonah Barrington—who had been lately discovered to have been guilty of malversation in the years 1805, 1806, and 1810. The facts were clear, and part of the evidence consisted of documents in the handwriting of the accused, which showed that he had appropriated to his own use some of the proceeds of derelict vessels adjudicated on by himself. He was, of course, removed.

REMOVAL OF A
JUDGE.
Annual Register,
1830, p. 127.

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The shock which this proceeding caused throughout the country testified strongly to the confidence—so unhesitating as to become natural—which society in England has in the integrity of its judges.

WELSH AND
SCOTCH JUDICA-
TURE.
Annual Register,
1830, p. 130.

An important alteration in the administration of the law was, that Wales was annexed to the English judicature, its own separate system being abolished. Instead of twelve, there were to be henceforward fifteen English judges, a new judge being added to each of the three Courts of King's Bench, Common Pleas, and Exchequer. In Scotland, two Courts were abolished—the High Court of Admiralty and the Commissary Court; and thus the Court of Session had more to do. It was thought, however, that the Court of Session had still more judges than were necessary: and their number was reduced from fifteen to thirteen.

FORGERY.
Hansard, xxii.,
1176.

Mr. Peel brought in a Bill, on the 1st of April, to circumscribe the infliction of the punishment of Death for Forgery. He proposed to abolish the death penalty in all cases where the forgery could have been defied by any degree whatever of care on the part of the person injured, preserving it only in cases of the forgery of the great seal, the privy seal, and the sign-manual: in forgeries of wills, on the public funds, on bank or money notes or orders, or representatives of money in any shape. This Bill, important as it was, did not meet the views of those who believed that the punishment of death for Forgery did not discourage the crime, and did hinder conviction for it: and Sir James Mackintosh proposed and carried a clause repealing the penalty in all cases of Forgery but that of Wills. The Lords restored the Bill to its original state, and sent it down so late in the session as to cause a question whether it should be accepted in the Commons, or thrown out, in the moral certainty that no lives would be forfeited under portions of a law which it was understood would be repealed in a few months. On the whole, it was thought best to take at once what was offered, and seek the rest hereafter; and Mr. Peel's Bill passed.

JEWISH DISABILI-
TIES.

The cause of the Jews was advocated strongly in the House, this session—as it was likely to be after the admission of the Catholics to parliament. Mr. Robert Grant opened the subject, and was supported at once by many of the ablest men in the House; and afterwards by a considerable body of petitions from the towns. There was a majority of 18 in favour of the introduction of the Bill; but it was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 228 over 165. The arguments against the admission of the Jews to parliament were of the usual untenable and mutually contradictory sort. The Jews were too few to be worth regarding: but they would overthrow the Christianity of the legislature: some Jews once hated the Founder of Christianity, and therefore all Jews would now seek to overthrow his Church. Nobody wished it: and then again, the desire to favour Jews showed the prevalent disposition to infidelity. All the petitions on the subject were in favour of the Jews; there was not one against them: and this proved how carefully they must be kept out, as a class of infidels powerful through popular sympathy. The most amusing plea was that it was unreasonable to admit Jews while Quakers were excluded; to which the friends of the Jews replied, by offering to admit the Quakers immediately.—To us it is strange to look back now, and see how long ago the Quakers were admitted, while the Jews still stand waiting out-

Hansard, xxiii.,
1336.

side:—it is strange to think that that method of management still subsists by which the hypocrite and lax holder of opinion find entrance without difficulty to the national councils, while the conscientious Jew, one of a body of singularly loyal and orderly and useful subjects, is excluded on account of a difference of belief on matters which, as is shown by the fundamental diversities of faith which exist within the walls of parliament, can have nothing to do with the business which goes forward there. The real difficulty probably is, in all such cases, that men suppose a proselytizing tendency in all who differ from themselves. In the case of the Catholics, there might be some colour of a reason for such an apprehension; but as everybody ought to know, there can be none such in the case of a Jew. A Jew no more desires to make gentiles Jews than a peer desires to make all the commonalty peers. In both cases, the privilege must come from the fountain of privilege; and its value lies mainly in its restriction. The Jews consider themselves the peerage of the human race, and accordingly have no tendency to proselytism.

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At the beginning of this session it is probable that no one foresaw what a vigorous growth of the political life of the nation was about to take place through the agitation of the question of Parliamentary Reform. This was beyond human foresight; because as yet the French revolution had not taken place, and its stimulating influence upon the politics of England could not be anticipated. But the subject of Parliamentary Reform was not neglected. The Marquess of Blandford was still too angry with parliament for passing the Catholic Relief Bill, still too firmly persuaded that the people of England were averse to Catholic emancipation, to give up his attempt to destroy the existing constitution of the House of Commons. The spectacle is curious of the zeal of this violent anti-Catholic gentleman, in the most "radical and revolutionary" question of the day; a zeal so vehement and rash, that long-avowed advocates of reform of parliament could by no means keep it in check, or prevent its throwing ridicule on their great cause. The Marquess of Blandford moved a very extraordinary amendment to the Address on the 5th of February; an amendment which he called a "wholesome admonition to the throne." This amendment declared—that the House was determined that his Majesty should not be the only person in his dominions left ignorant of the astounding fact of the deep and universal distress of the nation, and the consequent impending danger to the throne, and all the venerable institutions of the country. The reason assigned for the distress was the deviation from the true principle of representation, shown in the existence of purchaseable seats in parliament; by means of which the House was filled with men who considered their own interests alone, and heaped a ruinous weight of taxation upon the country; to remedy which, the King was exhorted to revert to the wisdom of our ancestors, and to make the House of Commons once more a representation of the popular will. On account of the truth mixed up with exaggeration and error in the long amendment of the Marquess, several of the liberal members voted for it; but all agreed that the subject was too vast and important to be dealt with as an amendment on the Address; and that a more definite statement of the object desired must

PARLIAMENTARY
REFORM.Hansard, xxii
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be proposed before the House could pass a really useful vote on any part of the subject.

Hansard, xxii.
678.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. p. 107.

Hansard, xxii.
170.

England's Seven Administrations, i., p. 258.

As early as the 18th of the same month, accordingly, the Marquess was ready to put the House in possession of his plan. Though the French revolution had not yet happened, the old Tories might be excused for thinking that the world was coming to an end, when they saw the Marquess of Blandford making advances to Mr. O'Connell, in promotion of the most "revolutionary project" of the century; and Mr. O'Connell, again, fraternizing with the Polignac ministry and the Bourbons, and expending all the virulence of his abuse on the liberals of France. We have on record some of the sayings of the time which reveal the state of men's minds. First, we have the old Tory, Lord Eldon, who writes of the Wellington policy as "establishing a precedent so dangerous, so encouraging to the present attempts at revolution under the name of reform, that he must be, in my judgment, a very bold fool who does not tremble at what seems to be fast approaching. Look, too, at France. The ministers beat in the Chambers, on the first day, by a very considerable majority! What the Duke of Wellington will do, I pretend not to guess. What will be said now about the fact that all the occasional laws against sedition have been suffered to expire? Heaven save us now! for in man there is no sufficient help." Then we have the Tory turned Radical, by the consternation which only plunged Lord Eldon "in very low spirits." The Marquess of Blandford said, that "the honourable and learned member for Clare had expressed sentiments on this momentous topic in which he most cordially concurred. He was happy to see that honourable gentleman devote his talents to the reprobation of so execrable a system, and he could assure him that he would gladly join heart and hand with so efficient a coadjutor in procuring its abolition." And next we have this member for Clare, this efficient coadjutor in the cause of Parliamentary Reform in London, vituperating the men who were risking their all in vindicating the principle of parliamentary representation in Paris. "I a Liberal!" exclaims Mr. O'Connell, at this juncture. "No: I despise the French Liberals. I consider them the enemies, not only of religion, but of liberty; and I am thoroughly convinced that religion is the only secure basis of human freedom." The assumption that because the French liberals resisted tyranny, they therefore resisted religion, is worthy of Lord Eldon: but a stroke of absurdity follows too gross even for Lord Eldon. Mr. O'Connell summed up by declaring himself a Benthamite. To the end of his days he cherished his hatred of all liberalism in France, probably from his leaning towards the authority of the Jesuits. That he had no faith in the Orleans family, and no congratulations to offer on their accession, is not to be wondered at; but his loyalty to the old Bourbons was a trait which, in the self-styled Liberator of Ireland, was too much for most men's gravity. "The Liberals," he rashly and ignorantly declared, "do not desire any liberty save that of crushing religion, and once again imbruing their hands in the blood of the clergy"—an assertion which is merely an exaggeration of the terrors of the "Protestant" members of the House of Lords about the Irish Liberals. Such were some of the curious incidents of the time.

Hansard, xxii.
688.

The Marquess of Blandford's plan was radical indeed. He proposed that a

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Committee of Parliament should be chosen by ballot, who should inquire into the condition of all the cities and boroughs in the kingdom, and should report to the Home Secretary all that had forfeited the fair conditions of representation; as if this last was a point so clear as to be left to the decision of any "Committee chosen by ballot!" The Home Secretary was immediately to notify the forfeiture to these constituencies and to the public through the Gazette; and the vacancies were to be filled up by representation of large towns, hitherto excluded. No compensation was to be given to the proprietors of disfranchised boroughs, unless such conciliation should be absolutely requisite to the passage of the measure. All members were to be paid; city and borough representatives two pounds, and county members four pounds per day; and all were to have been hitherto residents among the constituencies which they represented. Copyholders and certain leaseholders were to enjoy the franchise; and Scotland was to be placed on the same footing with England. The most obvious objection here is to the vagueness about the true principle of representation, by which the committee were to try the existing state of the cities and boroughs of England. If, as the mover declared, abundant information and authority were to be found in the law and history of England, it was clearly necessary to find and arrange them—to fix the test—before proceeding to the trial. That such a proposition should be entertained at all, and debated through a long sitting, showed the earnestness that existed for some measure of Parliamentary Reform. Lord Althorp moved, as an amendment, at a late hour, the resolution, "That it is the opinion of this House that a reform in the representation of the people is necessary." The majority against the amendment was 113; and then the original motion was negatived.

Hansard xxii.
697.Hansard, xxii.
724.

The question about the destiny of East Retford was brought forward again; that question which had cost Mr. Huskisson his seat in the government two years before. He voted as formerly; and there were 99 votes in favour of the transference of the representation to Birmingham; but 126 voted on the other side; and thus, in the opinion of many, cast the die which turned up "revolution." There are many who believe at this day, that if the representation of Birmingham had been permitted at that time, a bit-by-bit reform would have taken place instead of the sweeping measure which its enemies might be permitted to call "revolution." In Mr. Huskisson's speech on this occasion we find the first historical mention of the Political Unions which were now to form so prominent a feature of the times. The notice was this. "He saw in Birmingham lately an association which, as far as he could perceive its elements, principles, and operations, seemed exactly formed on the model of the Catholic Association; for it had its subscriptions, its funds, its meetings, its discussions, and its agitator. The purpose of this association was to raise a universal cry for Parliamentary Reform—to carry the question by exaggerating the difficulties, abuses, and distresses of the country. Admiring, as he did, the talent of the gentleman who took the lead (Mr. Attwood) at the Birmingham meeting, he, for one, would much rather see that gentleman in the House of Commons—as fortunately he saw the honourable member for Clare in the House of Commons. He would rather see the leader of the Birmingham meeting here as the representative of that town than in conducting such an association,

Hansard, xxii.
334.Hansard, xxii.
347.

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sending forth those statements and appeals to the country, which was, perhaps, too prone, at the present moment, to act on the apprehensions generated by them." Is it possible that Mr. Huskisson did not see (he who had so clear an eye for some things less evident), that when the attention of any portion of the English people is once fairly fixed on the principle of any one of their institutions, the yielding of a single point of detail can never satisfy them? If Birmingham had at that time obtained representation, and had sent Mr. Attwood to parliament, did he suppose that the Birmingham Union would have dissolved, any more than the Catholic Association would have dissolved if Mr. O'Connell had been permitted to take his seat after his first election for Clare? The Birmingham Political Union was formed for the promotion of the whole question of Parliamentary Reform, and not for obtaining a representation of its own town only. If this enfranchisement had been granted now, the success would have stimulated Manchester and Leeds, and other places, to a similar pursuit of their object; and then the old Tories would have charged the government with the consequences of yielding to popular movements. As it was, the denial answered the same purpose, of stimulating the popular will. The truth was, the time was come for the change. It mattered little, except as to the tempers of the parties concerned, whether government gave assent or denial. The time was come for the rending of the garments which the nation's life had outgrown; and the agreement or refusal to mend the first slit could make but the difference of a day in the providing of a new suit. The Duke of Wellington was soon to show that he saw nothing of this; but if Mr. Huskisson did not, it is only a fresh proof how little those who stand in the midst of a crowd of events can see before them.

Lord John Russell brought forward the subject of the representation of large towns, by moving for leave to bring in a bill to enable Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, to return members to the House of Commons: and this was the occasion of Mr. Huskisson's last speech on Parliamentary Reform. He supported the motion, but under protest against any extension of the boon beyond special and very pressing cases. There is an interest in reading his statement of his views, though his views may not be ours, as the last words we shall be able to give of one whose memory will ever be precious to his country. "To such a measure of reform" (as the present) "he should give his cordial support. As to a more extensive parliamentary reform—a measure founded upon the principle of a general revision, reconstruction, and remodelling of our present constitution—to such a general revision, and change of our constitution, he had been always opposed; and while he had a seat in that House, he should give it his most decided opposition. He conceived that if such an extensive reform were effected, they might go on for two or three sessions in good and easy times, and such a reformed parliament might adapt itself to our mode of government, and the ordinary concerns of the country; but if such an extensive change were effected in the constitution of parliament, sure he was that whenever an occasion arose of great popular excitement or reaction, the consequence would be a total subversion of our constitution, followed by complete confusion and anarchy, terminating, first, in the tyranny of a fierce democracy, and then in that of a military despotism, these two great calamities maintaining that natural order of succession which they have always been hitherto seen to observe. He was

therefore opposed to such an extensive change and revision of our representative system. It might be easy to raise objections to the boroughs, and by separating the representative system into its various constituent parts, to point out evils and abuses in several of them: but it was a waste of time, and a perversion of common sense, to look at it in that way. He would take it as a whole, and regarding our present system as one aggregate, he was opposed to any material change in it."

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Weak words—to be the last from such a man! With the explosive elements of wrong involved (as he allowed) in this aggregate, was the entireness to be best preserved by leaving the explosive elements to burst and shatter everything connected with them, or by taking them out while they might yet be safely handled? These were weak words to be the last from such a man; but the wisest men are weak when they prophecy of the future under the instigation of fear instead of the inspiration of faith. The motion was lost by a majority of 48. The subject was brought up again in May, however, when Lord John Russell took occasion to propose two resolutions in the place of a motion of Mr. O'Connell's, which was negatived. Mr. O'Connell's motion was for leave to bring in a bill to establish universal suffrage, triennial parliaments, and vote by ballot. Lord John Russell's resolutions were in favour of an increase in the number of representatives, and for the additional ones being given to large towns and populous counties. This incessant bringing up of the subject during the session, by Tory, Whig, and Radical leaders, testifies to the progress of the question in the national will. The French Revolution might accelerate the demand and the movement; but these preceding transactions show that parliamentary reform would have been required and obtained without the awakening of any new sympathy with any foreign people.

Hansard, xxiv.
1223, 24.

The man in all England who, at this critical season, did most to promote the cause of parliamentary reform, was the Duke of Newcastle. He made an avowal so broad and clear of his belief that the franchises of the citizens of Newark were his own, as much as any property whatever that he held, that many were startled into a contemplation of the actual system itself, who might otherwise have continued to argue about mere words. The independent voters of Newark sent up a petition to parliament, complaining of the undue influence of the Duke of Newcastle in the elections, which he exercised without any apparent recollection of the statute which prohibits the interference of peers in elections. The Duke's influence was mainly derived from his being the lessee of crown lands, amounting to 960 acres, which formed a sort of belt round three-fourths of the town of Newark. The ministers declared plainly in the House that they had no intention of renewing the lease of these lands to the Duke of Newcastle: and, this being the case, and the exposure and disgrace very complete, the committee asked for was considered by the majority not to be needful. The most really useful part of the affair, however, was the innocent amazement of the peer himself at such an interference with his use of his influence; an amazement expressed in words which were never let drop for a day during the continuance of the reform agitation, and which are a proverb to this hour—"May I not do what I will with mine own?" He had looked upon the electors of Newark as his "own;" but the 587 who had resisted his dictation, and striven to return an independent member, were very far from

DUKE OF NEW
CASTLE.Hansard, xxii.
1084.

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answering to the peer's notion of what Newark electors ought to be : and a great blessing the country from this time felt it to be that there were 587 electors within the Duke's belt of land who were not his "own."

ILLNESS OF THE KING.

The general impression that the King was very ill continued in the absence of all reliable information about his state, and notwithstanding the activity of the preparations for his customary birthday fête in April. It became known, at length, however, that the preparations were countermanded; and on the 15th of April, his Majesty's physicians issued a bulletin, announcing that the King was ill of a bilious attack, accompanied with a difficulty in breathing. The bulletins during this illness were extraordinarily deceptive; and the nation was kept as nearly as possible in the dark about the King's state to the last—almost every bulletin declaring him better, till, as a contemporary observed, "amidst these accumulated betternesses, the nation was wondering why he was not well, when it heard that he was dead." It is supposed that the King insisted on seeing the bulletins, and that the physicians feared the responsibility of making them true. This is a mockery which should have been prevented by some means or other. On the 24th of May, however, a message from the King to both Houses of Parliament, indicated the truth. The message told that the King was so ill that it was inconvenient and painful to him to sign papers with his own hand, and that he relied on the readiness of parliament to consider without delay how he might be relieved of this labour. There was no doubt in this case about the reality of the bodily illness, nor of the ability of the King to understand and give orders about the business brought before him; but the danger of the precedent was very properly kept in view, and the provision for affixing the sign-manual without trouble to the King was fenced about with all possible precautions, which could prevent the authority from being used by the creatures of an insane sovereign. The stamp was to be affixed in the King's presence, by his immediate order given by word of mouth (to obviate mistake of any sign by head or hand); a memorandum of the circumstances must accompany the stamp; and the document stamped must be previously endorsed by three members of the Privy Council. The operation of the bill was limited to the present session, that, if the King's illness, should continue, the irregular authority asked for must be renewed at short intervals. The bill was passed on the 28th of May; and the occasion for its use was over within a month. The King died at three o'clock in the morning of the 26th of June. The final struggle was sudden and short. He was sitting up when he felt what appears to be the peculiar and unmistakable sensation of death. He leaned his head on the shoulder of a page, exclaimed "O God! this is death!" and was gone. The immediate cause was the rupture of a blood-vessel in the stomach. Ossification of some of the large vessels about the heart had begun many years previously; and, before the end, the complication of diseases had become terrible.

Hansard, xxiv.
986.

DEATH OF THE KING.
June 26th.
Annual Register,
1830, p. 132.

The Kings of England and France were beckoned down from their thrones nearly at the same time. George IV. died just after his brother of France had issued his canvassing proclamation—his last words to his people—and before the result could be known; and both sovereigns were in a state of discontent, anger, and fear, at the state of the popular mind, and in view of the

future. Two men more unhappy than they were at this time could hardly have been found in the dominions of both. 1830.

It would indeed be difficult to point to a more unhappy life through its whole extent than that of George IV. Nothing went well with him; and as his troubles came chiefly from within, he had none of the compensations which have waited upon the most unfortunate of kings. Kings defeated, captive, dethroned—or diseased in body, or betrayed in their domestic relations—have usually had solace from noble emotions, strenuous acts, or sweet domestic affections. But our unhappy King had none of these. Through life he achieved nothing. He was neither a warrior, nor a statesman, nor a student, nor a domestic man. If he had been even a mechanic, like Louis XVI. the locksmith, it would have been something. He was nothing but the man of pleasure; and, even in an ordinary rank, no one leads such a life of pain as the man of pleasure. In his rank, where real companionship is out of the question, even that life of pain is deprived of its chief solace—the fellowship of comrades. The “first gentleman in Europe” might make himself as vulgar as he would in the pursuits of dissipation; he was still Prince, and therefore excluded from the hilarity which cannot exist where there is not equality.

His youth was unhappy. His parents disliked and restricted him, and thus drove him early into distrust and offence. What his married life was is seen in the story of his Queen. If he loved his only child, she did not love him; and he lost her. He had no friends: and if he chose to give that name to any of his counsellors, he knew that he had often their disapprobation and their compassion. Between himself and his people there was no tie, nor any pretence of one. He never showed the least desire for their happiness, which involved any personal sacrifice. He showed himself capable of petty resentments: he showed himself incapable of magnanimity. He let it be seen that the best government of his reign took place against his will, while he attempted disgraceful acts which did not succeed. He surrounded himself with persons whom the nation could not respect, while his selfish prodigality at their expense checked every growth of that loyalty which springs from personal attachment and esteem. Faulty as was his temper, his principles were no better. We have seen in the course of this history that his word was utterly unreliable: and other proofs stood out from the whole surface of his life. If it is asked whether there was no good to set against this amount of evil, the only answer, probably, that could be given by those most disposed in his favour is, that he was kindly and warm in his feelings towards those whom he took for his companions, whatever their deserts; and that he could be extremely agreeable and winning, and even outwardly dignified, when he chose. Like all Princes, he had his flatterers; and while he lived, praises of the Sovereign were afloat, as they are in every reign. The glories and blessings which accrued to the nation in his time naturally appeared to belong more or less to him at the moment. But it is not so after the lapse of twenty years. When we now look back upon the close of the war, the breaking up of the Holy Alliance, the reduction of taxation, the improvement in freedom of speech and the press, the emancipation of the Dissenters, and the Catholics, and the establishment of the principle and some of the practice of

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Free Trade, we involuntarily regard these as the acts and experience of a nation without a head. If it is now a conviction very common among us, that besides that irresistible influence which emanates from personal character, the sovereign has, with us, no longer any power but for obstruction, it is certain that no one person has done so much to ripen and extend this conviction as George IV. He declined the noble prerogative of rule over the heart and mind of his people by personal qualities, while using such opportunities as he had of reminding them of his obstructive power; and his death was received by them with an indifference proportioned to such deserts.

He died in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the eleventh of his reign; previous to which he had held the Regency for ten years.

CHAPTER XI.

AT the close of the first reign since the Peace, it is easy to see that a great improvement in the national welfare had taken place, though the period was in itself one of gloom and agitation. The old Tory rule was broken up, like an ice-field in spring, and the winds were all abroad to prevent its reuniting. There were obstacles ahead; but so many were floating away behind that the expectation of progress was clear and strong. On every account it was a good thing that the old Tory rule was broken up; but chiefly for this—that when the thing was done by the strong compulsion of fact, of necessity, men were beginning to look for the principle of the change, and thereby to obtain some insight into the views of the parties that had governed, or would or might govern the country. Men began to have some practical conception that the Tories thought it their duty to govern the people (for their good) as a disposable property; that the Whigs thought it their duty to govern as trustees of the nation, according to their own discretion; and that there were persons living and effectually moving in the world of politics, who thought that the people ought to govern themselves through the House of Commons. This perception once awakened, a new time had from that moment begun, of which we are at this day very far from seeing the end. With the departure of George IV. into the region of the past, we are taking leave of the old time, and can almost join in even Lord Eldon's declarations about the passing away of the things that had been, and the incoming of a new and portentous age of the national history, though we do not sympathize in his terrors and regrets, nor agree with him that what had been dropped was that which should have been retained, and that whatever should supervene was to be deprecated because it was new. We have, what the old Tories have not and cannot conceive of, the deepest satisfaction in every proof that the national soul is alive and awake, that the national mind is up and stirring. There was proof of this, at the close of this reign, in what had been done, and in what was clearly about to be done; and this trumpet call to advance was heard above loud groans of suffering, and deep sighs of depression; and the nation marshalled itself for the advance accordingly.

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CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE REIGN.

As for the facts of what had been done, the old Tory rule by hereditary custom, or an understanding among the "great families" whom Mr. Canning so mortally offended, was broken up. Exclusion from social right and privilege on account of religious opinion was broken up; that is, the system was, as a whole, though some partial exclusion remained, and remains to this day. In the same manner, the system of commercial restriction was broken up, though in practice monopoly was as yet far more extensive than liberty of commerce. Slavery was brought up for trial at the tribunal of the national conscience; and, whatever might be the issue, impunity at least was at an

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end. The delusion of the perfection of existing law was at an end; and the national conscience was appealed to to denounce legal vengeance and cruelty; to substitute justice in their place. Hope had dawned for the most miserable classes of society; for, while some of the first men in the nation were contending for an amelioration of the criminal law in parliament, one of the first women of her time was going through the prisons, to watch over and enlighten the victims of sin and ignorance. The admission of a new order of men into the Cabinet; the bending of the old order, even of the iron Duke himself, to their policy; the emancipation of Dissenters and Catholics; the adoption of some measures on behalf of slaves; the partial adoption of free trade; the continued ameliorations of the criminal law through the efforts of Sir S. Romilly, Mr. Peel, and Sir James Mackintosh; and the interest excited in the condition of prisoners by the exertions of Mrs. Fry—are features in the domestic policy of England which must mark for ever as illustrious the first reign succeeding the Peace.

Its chief misfortune, perhaps, is that it introduced a method, which some consider a principle of government—which cannot, from its nature, be permanent, and which no one would wish to be so. Now began, with the Catholic Relief measure, that practice of granting to clamour and intimidation what would not otherwise have been granted, which has ever since been the most unfavourable feature of our political history. The mischief began with the delay in granting the Catholics their fair claims; and those who caused that delay are answerable for the mischief. They are doubtless right in deprecating the evil, and in calling it a revolutionary symptom or fact: but they are wrong in laying it at any door but their own. It was not till the Whigs came into power that the greatness of the evil was evident to everybody: and then, when the Whigs alone were blamed for it, the censure was unjust. The earlier liberal measures were pushed forward in good time. Mr. Canning's foreign policy, and Mr. Huskisson's free trade, and all the ameliorations of the criminal law, were the results of the ideas of the men who offered them; offered before the nation was ready to demand them in a way not to be refused. With Catholic Emancipation the change came. The leading members of the government avowed their disinclination for the measure, and that it was extorted by necessity. In the story which we shall have next to tell, we shall see the consequences. They did not appear immediately; for, though reform of parliament would have been extorted from an unwilling government, there was happily a willing government ready to grant it. It was as much the result of the ideas of the men who gave it as Mr. Canning's foreign policy, and Mr. Huskisson's free trade; and all the world knew that the members of the government had advocated this reform for long years past, through evil and through good report; and they could, therefore, now bestow the boon with consummate grace. But the history of other transactions will not prove so gratifying. We shall have occasion to see how the Whigs were, not only what all rulers of our day must be, the servants instead of the masters, of principles of policy, but the servants, instead of the rulers, of the loudest shouters of the hour; and with the less dignity from their being the professors of popular principles. Dangerous as it might be to see a Wellington and a Peel yielding to popular demands what they would never have originated, there might be, and there was, a certain

dignity in it—a touch of heroic mournfulness which is altogether absent in the other case—when leaders professedly liberal do not originate measures, but have them extorted against their own convictions, by the clamour of their own preponderating party. As we shall see, there has been too much of this in a succeeding time; and some fearful consequences have probably to be met hereafter: but this is the place in which to fix the reproach where it is due—to charge upon the anti-Catholic portion of the aristocracy the consequences, be they what they may, of first compelling concessions to popular intimidation, and turning back the government from its glorious post of guide and ruler of the will of the people, to the ignominy of being its reluctant follower and servant.

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As for what remained to be done—obviously, in the view of all the people—the House of Commons must be reconstituted; municipal government must be purified: slavery must be abolished; something must be done to lighten the intolerable burden of the poor law; the corn laws, and as a consequence, the game laws must be repealed; religious liberty must be made complete; the youth of the nation must be educated; and something remained over and above, and still remains—more important and more pressing (if all men could but see it), than all these put together: the industrious must have their deserts of food and comfort. The Poor Law, the Corn Law, Taxation, and Education—these, if properly taken in hand, and amended to the utmost, might do something: but, whatever they might leave over must be done. It cannot, in the nature of things, happen for ever, or for very long, that men in rural districts shall toil every day and all day long, without obtaining food for themselves and their children; or that men in the towns should sit at the loom, or stand over the spindles through all the working hours of the day, for their whole lives, till age comes upon them, and then have no resource but the workhouse. The greatest work remaining to be done, was to discover where the fault lies, and to amend it while there was yet time. We shall hereafter see what has been done to this end; and must then draw our inferences as to what remains to be done.

In 1829, the weavers of Lancashire and Cheshire were earning, at best, from 4s. 4½d. to 6s. per week, when at work. The most favoured had to wait a week or two between one piece of work and the next: and about a fourth of the whole number were out of employ altogether. The parishes made allowances in the proportion necessary to enable these people to procure food and shelter: and the burden became so heavy that a continually increasing number of rate-payers sank down into the condition of paupers. At this time, a cotton mill was burned down at Chorley in Lancashire; and there was reason to suspect that the fire was not accidental—disputes having taken place between the proprietors and their men about wages. The factory was rebuilt; and persons were employed at the rate of wages formerly given. An advance was soon demanded and refused. The spinners turned out; and they used every effort to prevent others from taking their places: but, where so many were in need, hands were sure to be found. Four of the new workers lodged in the house of one of the overseers. At one o'clock in the morning (June 17th, 1830), a tremendous explosion shook the house to its foundation, destroyed the furniture, and blew out all the doors and windows—without,

STATE OF OPERATIVES.

Annual Register,
1830, Chron 92.

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however, materially injuring any of the inmates. A common breakfast-can, containing gunpowder, had been let down the chimney, and ignited by a slow match.—Here was one symptom of the state of society which could not long exist. Amidst fearful records of the destruction of property in the manufacturing districts by men wild with hunger, we meet with the yet more sickening stories of the Hibners and Philps, who hardly escaped from the hands of the mob for their treatment of parish apprentices. The name of Esther Hibner is familiarized to all ears by its infamy. The sum of her history is, that she treated her apprentices as the most barbarous and depraved of slaveholders treats his slaves, whom he would rather torture than make a profit of. She starved them—she beat them—she pulled out their hair—she had them ducked—till, happily, one died of the ill-usage, and the others were in consequence rescued. Esther Hibner was hanged. In this case, protection came when only one life had been sacrificed: but the succession of cases that was revealed at this time, and the general impression conveyed by the evidence, caused a conviction that the pauper apprentices were too many and too helpless to be properly cared for; and that there must be something intolerably wrong in the state of society which permitted them to swarm as they did.—During the same period, a case appeared here and there at the police-offices, or came to the knowledge of inquiring men, which showed that if the amount of pauperism was becoming unmanageable, so were the abuses of pauper funds. The corruption of morals caused by the parish allowance for infants was more like the agency of demons than the consequence of a legislative mistake. In many rural districts, it was scarcely possible to meet with a young woman who was respectable—so tempting was the parish allowance for infants in a time of great pressure. And then again there were the pauper marriages;—old drunkards marrying the worst subjects they could find in the neighbouring workhouses for the sake of the fee of two or three pounds given to get rid of the woman. The poverty of the industrious, the violence of the exasperated, the cruelty of the oppressor, the corruption of the tempted, the swindling of the corrupt, and the waste of the means of life all round, to a point which threatened the stability of the whole of society—these were things which could not long endure, and which made the thoughtful look anxiously for a change. The amount of poor-rate expenditure for relief at this time was between six and seven millions annually; and incessantly on the increase.

GAME LAWS.

First among the changes needed was the introduction of an abundance of food. While, however, men, women, and children, were actually wan and shrunken with hunger, they saw a sight which turned their patient sighs into angry curses. When the poor Irish lay hands on grain about to be exported, we do not wonder at the act, though we would fain make them understand that by the sale of that grain comes the fund which is their only resource for the payment of their labour, and their consequent means of bread, and hope of next year's crop. But when the starving peasant sees whole breadths of wheat devoured or laid waste before his eyes by the hares and pheasants of his rich neighbour, what can be said that shall deter him from putting in for his share? During this period the gaols were half-filled with offenders against the Game Laws: and besides the melancholy stories so frequent as to weary the newspaper reader, of poaching affrays, in which men of the one party were

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killed by violence in the night, and men of the other party were afterwards killed by law, we find a new order of offences rising up under the vicious system. We find that men prowled about in the fields near the great game covers, strewing and sowing poisoned grain. Country gentlemen were not then so well aware as later events have made some of them of the danger of suggesting to the ignorant peasant the use of poison, in any kind of self-defence against his neighbour. But, if the evil had never spread beyond the poisoning of pheasants and hares, there was enough in it to induce any thoughtful and humane man to inquire whether he was not pursuing his sports at too great a cost. If he did not know, and would not learn, the amount of social injury that he was causing in the useless consumption or destruction of food, it was clear to all eyes that he was causing his brother to offend by his persistence in the pursuit of a mere amusement. Some transactions of this time between the country gentlemen and their peasant neighbours remind us but too strongly of the days before the first French Revolution, when the great man of the château kept the neighbouring cottagers up all night, whipping the ponds, to silence the frogs. Subsequent events showed that these cottagers were of opinion that, as they were to toil for the great man in the day, he should have protected, instead of forbidding, their sleep at night: and events were now at hand which indicated something of the feeling of the ignorant and suffering peasantry against the landed interest of England.

It is during this period that we come upon the traces of the practice which POISONINGS. is, beyond all others, the opprobrium of our time—the practice of poisoning for the gratification of selfish passion. The perpetrators are of a different order from those of whom we read in the history of past centuries;—of whom we read with a shudder at the thought of living in such times: but the crime is as desperate in our day, and, it is to be feared, more extensive. Then, it was the holders of science and their intimates that did it;—those who ought best to have known the value of human life, and the irredeemable guilt of cruel treachery. In our day, it is the lowest of the low who do it:—people whose ignorance and folly, offered in evidence on their trial, make us aghast to think how, when, and where, we are living—with beings like these for fellow-citizens. We look upon these fellow-citizens of ours as upon ill-conditioned children, killing flies for their amusement, and breaking windows in their passion. They know nothing of the sacredness of human life, of virtue, decency, good fame, or of doing as they would be done by. They want something—money, or a lover, or a house, or to be free of the trouble of an infant; and they put out the life which stands in the way of what they want. Time and experience appears to show that this is but the beginning. Their sluggish faculties seem to be pleasurably animated by the excitement of the act; and they repeat it, till, at the present time, we find cases of men and women who have been poisoning relations and neighbours by the score, during a period of ten or fifteen years. The guilt and the shame lie with the whole of society which has permitted its members—hundreds of thousands of them—to grow up as if they were not human beings at all, but a cross between the brute and the devil. We can see the horror of the existence of such a class in another country, and shudder at the atrocious mental

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and moral condition of the *canaille* at the time of the first French Revolution : but it may be questioned whether France had at that time anything to reveal more sickening than our wholesale child-murder, for the sake of the profits from Burial Clubs, and the poisonings which sweep off whole families in the hamlets of our rural districts. In the year 1828, the idea seems to have been so new and appalling as to make us feel, in the reading, ashamed of the familiarity which has grown up in ten years. In 1828, Jane Scott was found guilty, at the Lancaster Assizes, of having murdered her mother by poison. She had been previously tried for the murder of her father ; but had escaped, through the death of a witness. Before she was hanged, she confessed both murders, and also that she had poisoned an illegitimate child of her own, and one of her sister's. The object of her parricide was to obtain property, which might tempt an acquaintance to marry her. Her age was twenty-one. She seems to have acted under the superficial excitability of a child, rather than from any fury of passion. This first case of a long series is here given expressly as such. Henceforward a general mention must suffice ; for the crime becomes more and more frequent. Next to the pain of the fact is that of hearing what is proposed as a remedy. Far and wide now, men are proposing to restrict and impede the sale of poisons ;—as if any mechanical check could avail against a moral mischief so awful ! It is not in barring out any knowledge once obtained that safety can be found, but in letting in more without restriction or delay. We have had warning of this for many years now ; yet no system of National Education is in practice, or likely to be so. Sectarian quarrels have come in the way. To this hour men are disputing about the order of religious education that shall be given, and insisting upon the right to communicate exclusively each his own views, while one generation after another passes off into the outer darkness, and beings, called human, are, after leading the life of devils, dying the death of brutes. Let this case of Jane Scott be preserved and perpetuated till we have done our duty by the living of her class, and then forgotten as soon as may be ; for, in holding up to view her dangling corpse, we are gibbeting ourselves.

BURNING

At the close of our last period mention was made of the affrays caused by the practice of body-snatching. In the present period, we have a long array of such narratives, and something worse. It had been for some time suspected that various ingenious methods were constantly in use to meet the demand of the hospitals for subjects for dissection. Among others, the detection of a single case of fraud in obtaining the body of a person unknown, dying in a workhouse, caused a suspicion that such frauds were frequent. A man and woman presented themselves to claim the body of a man who had dropped down dead on Walworth Common, declaring that the woman was the sister of the deceased. From their appearance of anxiety and grief, and the circumstantial story they told, no doubt of the relationship was entertained, till it was accidentally discovered that these people had sold the body to Saint Bartholomew's Hospital for eleven guineas. The only way in which the culprits could then be reached was by prosecution for stealing the clothes of the deceased. It had become pretty evident now that the requirements of science must be met by some arrangement which should facilitate the procuring of bodies for dissection ; and already individuals here and there were doing what

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they could by making known that they had by will left their own bodies for dissection. Some few had even sold their own bodies for that purpose, receiving at once a portion of the sixteen guineas, which was then the average price of such an article. But in the year 1828, a disclosure was made, which, while it startled everybody, warned such negotiators as we have mentioned to be careful as to the parties with whom they made their bargain. By an accidental discovery of a dead body, recognised as that of a woman in good health a few hours before, in the house of a man named Burke, at Edinburgh, it was revealed that a system of murder had been going on for some time, in order to supply "subjects" to the dissecting-rooms. Burke himself confessed fifteen murders which he and his accomplice Hare had perpetrated together. Their practice was to note any helpless half-wit and unfriended person in the streets, invite them home, make them first merry, and then stupidly drunk, and then suffocate them by covering the mouth and nose, and pressing upon the body. The medical men do not appear to have noticed any suspicious appearances about the corpses brought to them, or to have made any troublesome objections to the stories told in each case to account for the possession of the body. The only observation on record is that Dr. Knox, in one case, "approved of it as being so fresh." The horror of the medical men must have been extreme when the truth was revealed. The consternation of the public was excessive. Probably it was not known to any one, or ever will be, how far the practice of Burking (as the offence was henceforth called) extended at that time; how much was true of the dreadful stories of murder current in every town and village in the kingdom. Most people believed at that time that it was the custom of not a few gangs of murderers to clap plasters on the mouths of children and unsuspecting or helpless persons, to strangle them, and sell them to the doctors: and it is probable that the crime was suggested by the fear, and by the notoriety of the case of Burke and Hare: while the practical jokes instigated by the general apprehension were, no doubt, numerous. The crime was superseded by improved care on the part of surgeons, and by legislation, which supplied them with what they wanted. But the memory of the occasion is kept alive by the new term which it supplied. Since that date, we have had the verb "to burke;" which means to stifle or extinguish any subject or practice, from motives of self-interest. The execution of the murderer took place at Edinburgh in January, 1829, when the spectacle of popular rage and vindictive exultation was fearful. Shouts arose from a multitude vast beyond precedent—shouts to the executioner of "Burke him; give him no rope; burke him!" And at every convulsive throe, a huzza was set up, as if every one present was near of kin to his victims. When the body was cut down, there was a cry for "one cheer more!" and a general and tremendous huzza closed the diabolical celebration.

Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 19.

This was not the only crime of this period which stimulated legislation. A shock was given to the general feeling by the execution of a Quaker for forgery. The case was so clear and so common—a case of rash embezzlement, covered by the forgery of bills, in the hope of retrieval before the time came round—that there could be no doubt about his punishment while others were so doomed: but the peculiarities of the case quickened the efforts of those who disapproved of capital punishment for forgery. Hunton was executed on the

A NOTABLE CRIME.

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Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 173.

8th of December: and on the 27th of the same month, a case of embezzlement occurred, which eclipsed all prior adventures of the kind. A member of parliament, Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and a partner in the banking-house of Remington, Stephenson, and Co., absconded, in company with a clerk of the bank. Some suspicion was excited in the minds of the gentlemen who were his securities at the Hospital, by the culprit, Mr. Rowland Stephenson, leaving home at four o'clock in a December morning; and they obtained from the President a cheque for £5,000 on the bank, whereby the balance at the bank might be lessened. The cheque was presented and paid at eleven o'clock; and at half-past one the bank stopped. The delinquents got off from the Welsh coast for Savannah.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 185.

A crime more remarkable than these, and unspeakably odious to public feeling, was that of the abduction of a young lady, an only child, by the conspiracy of a rapacious family. The Wakefields were the conspirators, and one of them was the principal in the case; the husband as he hoped to be, and as he was, in the eye of the law, till a divorce could be obtained; a process which was quickly completed in a case where the universal sympathy was with the wronged parents, and their deceived and affectionate child. This young lady, aged only fifteen, was fetched away from school at Liverpool, on false pretences; and then made the victim of her attachment to her parents, by means of stories of their illness, pecuniary embarrassment, and so forth; so that she was carried to Gretna Green, and married there, and then conveyed abroad, where she was soon overtaken and rescued by her uncle. She went through the suffering of the prosecution of her enemy, and of the divorce process; married not long afterwards, and died early. The brothers Wakefield were imprisoned for three years—Edward Gibbon Wakefield in Newgate, and his brother William in Lancaster Castle.

Annual Register,
1827, Chron. 326.

Annual Register,
1830, Chron. 73.

A delinquent who has ever since been a standing satire on the gullibility of English men and women, made his first appearance in public in May, 1830. Joseph Ady then wrote his first recorded letter, offering mysterious advantages on payment of a sovereign; and, the promised advantages not being apparent, he was brought before a magistrate on a charge of swindling. And he has never since left off swindling, in precisely the same manner, making, it is believed, a good living for many years, by the credulity of his correspondents. He baffled the ingenuity of every one who wished to stop his career, till the assistance of the Post Office authorities was called in. By making him responsible for the postage of his unaccepted letters, he has been checked at last, and laid up as a debtor to the Postmaster-General. But in the intervening eighteen years, it may be safely alleged that no one person in the kingdom has consumed so much time and patience of the magistrates in London, or, in his character of swindler, so tickled the fancy of the wide public—a multitude of whom, all the while, fully aware of his dealings with others, hesitated to forego the chance of some great advantage which might be purchased for one sovereign. Many are the young and old ladies; many the shopkeepers, with entries of bad debts, possibly recoverable, in their books; many the professional men, experienced in the odd turns of human life and fortunes—who have held a letter of Joseph Ady's between the finger and thumb, waiting for some suggestion which would save them from shame and ridicule in the act of sending a sovereign to the noted

Joseph. He is an old man now; but who will say that he is too old to find more dupes, if ever he escapes from the grasp of the Postmaster-General?

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At four o'clock in the morning of Monday, the 2nd of February, 1829, a man passed through the Minster yard at York, and saw a light in the building. Supposing that somebody was at work about a vault, he took no notice; and indeed the last thing likely to occur to any one was that York Minster could be on fire. Between six and seven, a boy, one of the choristers, passing the same way, set his foot on a piece of ice, and fell on his back, when, dusk as it was, he saw that smoke was coming out at various parts of the roof. He ran to the man who had the keys. On entering, it was found that the fine carved woodwork of the choir was all on fire. That carving, done in the fourteenth century, with its curious devices, long become monumental, was evidently doomed. The preservation of any part now seemed to depend on the roof not catching fire: but the wood of the roof was extremely dry; and it presently kindled as a tongue of flame touched it here and there: and at half-past eight, it fell in. The mourning multitude who looked on now told each other that their beautiful Minster was gone. But such exertions were used that the flames were checked—less by the efforts of the people (though everything possible was done) than by the failure of any combustible substance when the tower was reached. The great east window, the glory of the fabric, suffered but little: and the stone screen which separated the communion-table from the Ladye Chapel was capable of repair. The clustered pillars of the choir were ruined, being of magnesian limestone, and splitting into fragments under the action of the fire.

YORK MINSTER
FIRED.

Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 23.

On inquiry, it was immediately ascertained that the mischief was done by an insane man, named Jonathan Martin, who believed himself directed by a divine voice to destroy the Minster. He told his wife of his supposed commission; and she nearly diverted him from his purpose by asking what was to become of their child. The voice however urged him again: he travelled to York, secreted himself in the Minster on the Sunday evening, struck a light at night with a razor, flint, and tinder, shouted "Glory to God!" till he was weary, and at three in the morning collected the cushions, set fire to them with a bundle of matches, broke a window, and let himself down to the ground outside by the knotted rope of the prayer-bell. Such was his own account; and several persons testified to having heard noises in the cathedral in the course of the night. How it was that no one of them took steps to ascertain the cause has never been explained.—At the end of a month, the estimates for the restoration were prepared, and a meeting was held, the tone of which was so earnest and spirited as to leave no doubt that the work would be well and completely done. Happily, some drawings of the stalls and screen of the choir remained in the hands of the Dean and Chapter, which facilitated the imitation of the work destroyed: and it was resolved that the imitation should be as complete as possible. The poor lunatic was of course so confined as to be kept out of the way of further mischief. He had done enough for one lifetime.

On the 27th of April, there was a yet more serious alarm: for Westminster Abbey was on fire. A little after ten at night, flames were seen issuing from the north transept. As the news spread, it caused a pang in many hearts—so

ACCIDENTS.
WESTMINSTER
ABBAY.

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Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 80.

NEW BRUNSWICK
THEATRE.

THE THAMES
TUNNEL.

Edinburgh Ency-
clopedia; art.
Tunnel.
London, vol. iii.
pp. 56—61.

strong seemed the probability that the fashion of burning cathedrals would spread, as the fashion of desperate crimes is wont to spread, among infirm brains. The anxiety of the moment was about the difficulty of getting at the place that was burning. The Dean was out of town; but his function was well filled; and the mischief soon stopped. A cast-off screen, used in the Westminster plays, and put away here, with other lumber, in a corner, was on fire, and falling, had kindled the boards. When an entrance was obtained, the flames were climbing rapidly to the roof; and it was considered certain that the delay of half an hour would have caused the destruction of the building.—There was for some time a good deal of mystery about the origin of the fire. The only thing clear at first was that it must have been done by somebody secreted among the lumber: but the finding of a mass of lead in a strange place, and traces of hobnail shoes, were thought to show that thieves had come to steal lead from the roof, and that the fire was caused by them.

A fearful accident occurred during this period which occasioned a useful amount of discussion—the Coroner's Jury sitting for six weeks. A new theatre—the Brunswick Theatre—had been recently erected in Wells Street, for the eastern part of London. The walls, twenty-two inches thick, supported a cast-iron roof. The architect thought this roof enough, though not too much for the walls to support: and when he saw the proprietors adding one weight after another—suspending the carpenters' shops, heavy scenes, &c., from the roof—he gave repeated warnings of the danger of the experiment. The theatre was opened on Monday, the 25th of February—the audience little dreaming, as they left it, what a danger they had escaped. On the Friday following, the 29th, at the time of rehearsal, when many people were in the theatre, the walls gave way, and the iron roof came crashing down. Ten houses on the opposite side of the street were destroyed, and some passengers, and a dray and horses crushed. Eleven persons within the theatre were immediately killed, and twenty were seriously hurt. The jury returned a verdict of strong censure against the proprietors, in which the architect was not implicated.

The most interesting class of casualties which happened during this period was that of Thames Tunnel accidents. Every man, woman, and child, who read newspapers had some ideas and feelings about this great work. They knew that though many persons had thought of tunnels under rivers, none had been able to make them; and that, in this case, the credit of doing the thing was infinitely greater than that of conceiving of it. They had some idea of the great commercial importance of this work: but the predominant interest was from sympathy with the gallant engineer, Mr. Brunel.—The Tunnel itself was begun with the year 1826; and the first nine feet were easy—the soil being stiff clay. Through this substance, the celebrated shield of Mr. Brunel pushed its way, inch by inch, as the worm, from whose boring process he took the idea of his enterprise, works in its cylindrical shell, by hairs breadths, through the hardest wood. Before the middle of February, the workmen came to a dangerous part; a tract of loose, watery sand; and for thirty-two days, there was momentary danger of the river breaking in. On the 14th of March, they came to clay again; and they went on very happily, boring through it till they had built 260 feet of their great cylinder.

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—On the 14th of September occurred the first breach, when the river poured down upon the top of the shield. The engineer had foreseen the danger, and provided against it. A month after, the same thing happened again; and again his foresight had been equal to the occasion.—With a few alarms, the work went on well till the following April; when the soil became so moist, that men were sent down from a boat in a diving bell, to see what was the matter. The men left behind them a shovel and hammer at the bottom of the river; and these tools were presently washed into the Tunnel on the removal of a board—showing how loose was the soil throughout the eighteen feet which lay between the top of the Tunnel and the bottom of the river.—In the middle of May some vessels moored just above the tunnel-works; and this occasioned an unusual washing of the waters overhead. On the 18th occurred the first great irruption of the river. In it came, sweeping men and casks before it, glittering for a moment in the light of the gas lamps, and then putting them out, and blowing up the lower staircase of the shaft. The workmen barely escaped; and one who was in the water was rescued by Mr. Brunel. The roll was instantly called; and not one was absent.—The cavity above was closed with bags of clay; and before August was out, the traces of the disaster were cleared away; and all were at work again as if nothing had happened.—By the beginning of 1828, the middle of the river was reached; and, whatever had been the wear and tear of anxiety, vigilance, and apprehension, for two years, the engineer had thus far succeeded, without the loss of a single life. On the 12th of the next August, a rush of water occurred which caused the death of six men. Mr. Brunel himself was hurt; and his life was saved only by the rush of water carrying him up the shaft. When the river bottom was explored by means of the diving bell, the cavity was found to be so large that scarcely any one but Mr. Brunel would have thought of filling it up: but he undertook and achieved it,—four thousand tons of clay being required for the purpose. But the directors were discouraged: the funds were exhausted: the Tunnel was shut up for seven years; and Mr. Brunel had to bear the long mortification of this suspense. He knew the substantial character of the work, as far as it had gone; and he never lost the hope of being permitted to finish it; and meantime, he had the sympathy of a multitude of the English people in his toils, his sufferings, and his indomitable courage and perseverance. It was no uncommon thing, in those days, to overhear little boys telling their sisters the story of the enterprise, or arguing with each other as to whether it would ever be completed: and in the factories and farmsteads and public houses of the land, the romance of the Tunnel engaged a large share of true English pride and hopefulness.

Some other public works prospered better: and one great event in the commercial history of this period was the opening of St. Katherine's Dock. The privileges of the older docks were to die out between the years 1822 and 1827: and some of the principal merchants of London considered it desirable at once to obviate a renewal of dock monopolies, and to provide for present and future expansion of commerce, by building a new dock. They procured their Bill in 1825; and proceeded to take down eight hundred houses, and St. Katherine's Hospital, founded in 1148, by Maude, spouse of King Stephen—

St. KATHERINE'S
Dock.

London, iii. 74-
76.

re-establishing this hospital and appurtenances in Regent's Park. The first

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stone of the new dock was laid in May 1825; and it was actually finished and opened in October 1828, though the mere circuit wall, lofty and secure, comprehends an area of twenty-three acres, and there is accommodation within for 120 ships, besides smaller craft, and for 110,000 tons of goods. The most noticeable circumstance in connection with St. Katherine's Dock is perhaps the new economy of time and convenience in loading and unloading vessels, from the use of scientific principles and methods discovered since the last erections of the kind. The capital employed exceeded £2,000,000.

LONDON MARKETS.
Companion to the
Almanac, 1830,
241.

The Markets of London were much improved during this period—the Duke of Bedford building the handsome edifice in Covent Garden, which occupies the place of the dirty, inconvenient, and unsightly buildings which formerly stood in the centre of the market area:—Fleet Market being opened in November 1829, and Hungerford Market begun in 1830. Besides the convenience and advantage to health conferred by the markets themselves, they occasioned the opening of new streets and the removal of many nuisances. The old Fleet Market became the present Farringdon-street; and Hungerford-street was rebuilt, on a new site, and with an increased width of ten feet.—Elsewhere, the street improvements were very great; much space being cleared round St. Martin's Church, by which a close neighbourhood was ventilated; and yet greater advantages gained by the removal of Exeter Change and the adjacent houses. Men's minds were by this time turned to the subject of street-improvement (which means primarily health-improvement) in London; and that course of action was beginning which, with the help of railway facilities, will end only, we may hope, with the laying open every court and alley where men live to the passage of the air of heaven.

PARKS.

The health and pleasure of the Londoners were beginning to be considered in regard to the Parks, as well as the streets. In 1827, St. James's Park, which was before as little beautiful as any piece of ground in such a place could well be made, was laid out anew, with such exquisite taste as makes it one of the finest walks in the world. In the same year, Hyde Park was much improved by drainage and planting.—The Regent's Park was continually improving by the growth of its plantations, and becoming as much a favourite of promenaders as any park in London. On its outskirts, too, there was now a great and increasing attraction. The Zoological Gardens, begun in 1825, were opened to visitors in the spring of 1828; and those who came to enjoy the wise and profitable pleasures of the place soon amounted to hundreds of thousands, so as to guarantee the self-support of the institution. The opening of the first Zoological Gardens in England deserves to be noted in any history of popular interest—so great is the privilege of an airy walk among a vast variety of the creatures, winged and four-footed, which we may read of as peopling all the lands of the globe, but can here alone ever hope to see.

BUCKINGHAM
PALACE.

The King was during this period pleasing himself, but nobody else, with the erection of Buckingham Palace. Whatever may be thought of his gentlemanly qualities in other ways, his subjects agreed, when they looked at the Brighton Pavilion, and at his Pimlico palace, that he had not good taste in building and architecture; for his edifices were neither heathful, convenient, nor beautiful. The cost of Buckingham Palace was enormous; partly from frequent changes of plan in the sovereign and his architect, which went to impair the

beauty of the structure, as well as to increase the expense. The one alteration of raising the wings cost £50,000; and the whole affair little if at all less than £500,000. Parliament did not permit this extravagance to pass unproved, a Committee of the House of Commons issuing a strong censure upon it in 1829. A nearly similar sum was voted by parliament for the preservation and improvement of Windsor Castle; and no one was heard to object to this item of the national expenditure. The preservation of this old royal castle is truly a national duty; and the manner in which it was done was satisfactory and gratifying to the best judges.

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WINDSOR CASTLE.

The new Post-office bears inscribed on the frieze above the columns of the façade the date of the reign of George IV., 1829. Yet it was set about in 1815, after the old situation in Lombard-street had been found unfit for the enlarged and increasing business of the establishment. It is amusing to read now, in the papers of the time, the accounts of the vastness of the new establishment, as transcending even the needs of the expanding postal communication of the day. If any one could have foreseen what was to happen to the postal communication of Great Britain within a few years, a somewhat different tone would have been used. But it is well that men should enjoy the spectacle of their own achievements for a while, before they become abashed by a knowledge of the greater things yet to be done. The new Post-office will always be considered fine in aspect; and in 1829 it might fairly be called vast in its dimensions and arrangements, however much these may need enlargement to meet the wants of a later time.

NEW POST OFFICE.

During the same year London University was advancing; the ground was clearing for the erection of King's College, and the Athenæum Clubhouse was preparing for the reception of its members at the opening of the next year. The club had been in existence six years; and it was now so flourishing as to be able to build for itself the beautiful house which overlooks the area where the Regent's palace of Carlton House stood at the time of its origin. These modern clubs are a feature of the age worthy of note; for they differ essentially from the clubs so famous in the last two centuries. The two have no condition in common except that of admission by ballot, or by consent of the rest, however expressed. Dr. Johnson's account of a club is that it is "an assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions;" but there is implied in this a degree of mutual acquaintanceship and fellowship which do not exist in the large modern clubs, where the object is not political or literary, or even social, but merely the personal convenience and enjoyment of the members, who use for this object the principle of the economy of association. The modern club is a mixture of the hotel, the home, and the reading-room. The member calls for what he pleases, and is waited on as at a hotel; he goes in and out, and lives in splendid apartments without daily charge, as at home, his subscription covering his expenses; and he sees newspapers and books, and meets acquaintances, as at the reading-room. Of the convenience of the arrangement, of the soundness of the principle of the economy of association, there can be no doubt; and it is on this account—because it may be hoped that the principle will be extended from these clubbists to classes which need the aid more pressingly—that the London clubs of this century form so important a feature of the time. There is some complaint that these luxurious

LONDON CLUBS.

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abodes draw men from home, make them fond of a bachelor life, and tend to discourage marriage—already growing too infrequent among the upper classes of society—and to lessen the intercourse between men and women of education: objections which will never be practically available against the clear daily convenience of such institutions. The remedy will be found, if it is found, not in unmaking these associations, but in extending them to a point which will obviate the objections. Already, the less opulent classes are stirring to prove the principle of the economy of association in clubs, where the object is—not bachelor luxury and ease—but comfort and intellectual advantage in which wife and sister may share the general table, library, and lecture-room, where those whose daily business lies far from home may enjoy midday comfort and evening improvement at a moderate expense, through the association of numbers. The city clerk, the shopman, the music and drawing-master and mistress, the daily governess, married persons, and brothers and sisters, can now live out of town, can dine here, and see the newspapers, and stay for the evening lecture, while enjoying the benefit of an abode in the country, instead of a lodging in a close street in the city. When the experiment has been tried somewhat further, and found to succeed, it may be hoped that women will have courage to adopt the principle, and to obtain more comfort and advantage out of a slender income than a multitude of widows and single women do now. In a state of society like our own at present—a transition state as regards the position of women—the lot of the educated woman with narrow means is a particularly hard one. Formerly, every woman above the labouring class was supported by father, husband, or brother; and marriage was almost universal. In the future, possibly marriage may again become general; and if not, women will assuredly have an independent position of self-maintenance, and more and more employments will be open to them as their abilities and their needs may demand. At present, there is an intervening state, in which the condition of a multitude of women of the middle class is hard. Marriage is not now general, except among the poor. Of the great middle class it is computed that only half, or little more, marry before middle age. It is no longer true that every woman is supported by husband, father, or brother; a multitude of women have to support themselves; and only too many of them, their fathers and brothers too; but few departments of industry are yet opened to them, and those few are most inadequately paid. While this state of things endures (which, however, cannot be for long) there is a multitude of educated women in London, and the country towns of England, living in isolation on means so small as to command scarcely the bare necessities of life. They are dispersed as boarders in schools and lodging-houses, able to obtain nothing more than mere food, shelter, and clothes, without society, without books, without the pleasures of art or science, while the gentlemen of the London clubs are living in luxury on the same expenditure, by means of the principle of economy of association. When such women have looked a little longer on the handsome exterior of these Club-houses, and heard a little more of the luxury enjoyed within, it may be hoped that they will have courage to try an experiment of their own: clubbing together their small means—their incomes, their books and music—and make a home where, without increased expenditure, they may command

a good table, good apartments, a library, and the advantages and pleasures of society. It seems scarcely possible that the new Club principle of our time, already extending, should stop short of this, while so many are looking forward to a much wider application still. Those who think this an unreasonable expectation will consider the opening of the Athenæum Club-house, with its 1,000 members, and that of the United Service and other neighbouring joint-stock mansions, a sign of the times worth noting.

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Two large public buildings were rising at this time within a few miles of London, which have nothing in common but their date. There was a grand Stand on Epsom race-course, of which nothing more need be said than what was said at the time; that it was "on a more magnificent scale than the stand at Doncaster." What does the subject admit of more? The other edifice was the Metropolitan Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell; of whose destination so much might be said as to need a volume. We can merely note here what a history of the time requires—that the mode of life within those walls was almost as new as the edifice itself; and there were things to be seen there far nobler and more interesting than any architectural spectacle ever offered to the eyes of men. The building-up that was to go on within was far grander than any that could be seen without; the building-up of the overthrown faculties—the restoration of shattered affections. The Middlesex magistrates secured the services of Doctor and Mrs. (afterwards Sir William and Lady) Ellis, as superintendents; and their method of management stands in noble contrast with that of former times, when the insane were subjected to no medicinal or moral treatment, but only to coercion. Instead of being chained, and left in idleness and misery, the patients here were immediately employed, and permitted all the liberty which their employment required. Not only might they be seen gardening, with the necessary tools; but the men dug a canal, by which stores were brought up to the building at a great saving of expense. A score of insane men might be seen there, working with spade, pickaxe, and shovel: they built the wall; they kept the place in repair; they worked and lived much as other men would have done; and from first to last, no accident happened. They attended chapel; and no interruption to the service ever occurred. The women earned in their work-rooms the means of buying an organ for the chapel service. No sign of the times can be more worthy of notice than this; that the insane had begun to be treated like other diseased persons,—by medicine and regimen, and with the sympathy and care that their suffering state requires. As for the results,—the recoveries were found to be out of all proportion more numerous than before, and continually increasing: the pecuniary saving of a household of working people over that of a crowd of helpless beings raving in a state of coercion, was very great; and of the difference in the comfort of each and all under the two systems there can, of course, be no doubt. The Hanwell Asylum was not, even at first, the only one in which the humane and efficacious new method of treating insanity was practised; but, as the Metropolitan Asylum, built at this date, it was the most conspicuous, as were the merits of Dr. and Mrs. Ellis, from their having been many years engaged and successful in the noble task of their lives.

EPSOM STAND.
Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 17.

HANWELL ASY-
LUM.
Companion to the
Almanac, 1831,
p. 220.

We find during this period much improvement going on in drainage and

DRAINAGE.

1830.

Companion to the
Almanac, 1830,
p. 253.

RAILWAY.

Companion to the
Almanac, 1830,
p. 251.

enclosure of land, and extension of water-works. The Ewbank drainage, by which 9,000 acres of land in Cardiganshire were reclaimed for cultivation, was completed in 1828, with its embankments, cuts, three miles of road, and stone bridge. In a small insular territory the addition of 9,000 acres to its area of cultivation is not an insignificant circumstance.—At the same date we find an achievement of somewhat the same kind notified in the records of the year, in those capital letters which indicate the last degree of astonishment. Chat Moss, lying in the line of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, was under treatment for the formation of the line; and we are told that “horses with loaded waggons, each weighing five tons, are constantly moving over those parts of the moss which originally would scarcely bear a person walking over it.”—The marvels of this first great English Railway were opening upon the world by degrees. This solidifying of Chat Moss was enough at first. Next we find that two locomotives were put to use on the works, to draw the marl and rock from the excavations, at a saving of nearly £50 a month in one case, and more in the other. But the highest astonishment of all was experienced on occasion of the race of locomotives on the line, for a prize of £500, when “the Rocket actually accomplished one mile in one minute and twenty seconds; being at the rate of forty-five miles an hour.” If men had been told even at that late date at what speed our Queen would be travelling twenty years later, they would have been as truly amazed as our great grand-fathers could have been at the notion of travelling from London to Edinburgh in a day. It is very interesting to observe how strong was the exultation, twenty-years ago, when any improvement in road-making turned up; how anxious men were to publish new facts about the best methods of skirting hills, managing differences of level, and connecting the substructure and superstructure of the mail roads, so as to facilitate to the utmost the passage of the mails. We find earnest declarations of the increase of postal correspondence, of the evils of delay, and of the benefits of rapid communication between distant places. These notices seem to us now clear indications of the approach of the railway age: but no one then knew it. What these complaints, and declarations, and desultory toils indicated, we can now recognise, but our fathers—except a philosopher here and there—could not then foresee. Nor shall we perhaps learn philosophy from the lesson, nor perceive that every urgent want, every object of restless popular search, foreshadows a change by which the want will be met, and the search rewarded. As men were anxiously and restlessly mending their old roads up to the very time of the opening of the great first English railway, so may we be complaining and toiling about some inadequate arrangement which needs superseding, while on the verge of the disclosure of the supersession. It would save us much anxiety and some wrath, and render us reasonable in our discontents if we could bear this in mind as often as we come into collision with social difficulties, whether they be mechanical or political; for social difficulties of both orders come under the same law of remedy.

READING FOR
THE BLIND.

Edinburgh, Paper,
April, 1828.

In 1828, a Committee of the Professors of the University of Edinburgh were employed on a very interesting service—witnessing how, by means of a special method of printing, the blind “were able to read with their fingers as quickly, or nearly so, as we could suppose them to do with their sight in ordinary circumstances.” Since that time the method of printing for the blind by raised

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letters, to be traced with the fingers, has been much extended; and embossed maps are largely brought into use, to teach them geography. The question of the existence of a faculty by which space could be apprehended and reasoned about, without any aid from the sense of sight, was proved by the case of Dr. Saunderson; and it is very interesting to watch its working in children who have never seen light, when they learn geography by means of these embossed maps. And the printing of books for their use has been facilitated from year to year, till now the number of books to which they have access is greatly increased, and their cost much diminished. The honour of the invention, in the form under notice, was assigned to Mr. Gall, by the Committee of Edinburgh Professors: and it is an honour greater than it is in the power of princes to bestow.

Before this time, the public had become aware of Sir W. Scott's claim to the undivided authorship of the Waverley Novels. In 1827, the copyrights of the novels, from Waverley to Quentin Durward, with those of some of the poems, were sold by auction, and bid for as if the successive editions of these wondrous works had not already overspread the civilized world. After the unparalleled issue which had amazed the book-trade for so many years, the competition for the property was yet keen; the whole were purchased by Mr. Cadell for £8,500; and he made them produce upwards of £200,000. What would the novelists of a century before—what will the novelists of a century hence—if such an order of writers then exists—think of this fact? Genius of a high quality finds or makes its own time and place: but still the unbounded popularity of Scott as a novelist seems to indicate some peculiar fitness in the public mind for the pleasure of narrative fiction in his day. And it might be so: for his day lay between the period of excitement belonging to the war, and that later one of the vast expansion of the taste for physical science, under which the general middle class public purchases five copies of an expensive work on geology for one of the most popular novels of the time. Certain evidences, scattered through later years, seem to show that while the study of physical science has spread widely and rapidly among both the middle and lower classes of our society, the taste for fiction has, in a great degree, gone down to the lower. Perhaps the novel reading achieved by the middle classes during Scott's career was enough for a whole century; and in sixty years hence, the passion may revive. To those, however, who regard the changes occurring in the office and value of literature, this appears hardly probable. However that may be, the world will scarcely see again in our time a payment of above £8,000 for any amount of copyright of narrative fiction.

SCOTT'S NOVELS.

Annual Register,
1827, Chron. 200.

A great festival was held at Stratford-upon-Avon, in April, 1827, on Shakspeare's birth-day, and the two following days—from the 23rd to the 25th inclusive. There was a procession of Shakspeare characters, music, a chanting of his epitaph at the church, banquets, rustic sports, and a masquerade, chiefly of Shakspeare characters. Such festivals—commemorating neither political nor warlike achievement, but something better than either—are good for a nation, and themselves worthy of commemoration in its history.

Annual Register,
1827, Chron. 84.
SHAKSPEARE FESTI-
VAL.

Some old favourites of the drama, or rather of the stage, went out during this period; and some new ones came in. Fawcett retired, after having amused and interested the crowd of his admirers for thirty-nine years; and Grimaldi,

ACTORS.

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Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 85.

Life of Lord El-
don, iii. 46.

SONTAG.

the unequalled clown, took his farewell in a prodigious last pantomime. There was something unusually pathetic in his retirement, however, sad as are always the farewells of favourite actors. He was prematurely worn out. As he said that night, he was like vaulting ambition—he had overleaped himself. He was not yet eight-and-forty; but he was sinking fast. “I now,” he said, “stand worse on my legs than I used to do on my head.” This was a melancholy close of the merriment of Grimaldi’s night and of his career. But there is seldom or never an absence of favourites in the play-going world. While, according to Lord Eldon, the sun of England was about to set for ever—while a Catholic demagogue was trying to force his way into parliament, to the utter destruction of Church and State, and everything else—Lord Eldon thus writes: “Amidst all our political difficulties and miseries, the generality of folks here direct their attention to nothing but meditations and controversies about the face, and figure, and voice, of the new lady who is come over here to excite raptures and encores at the Opera House, viz. Mademoiselle Sontag. Hardly any other subject is touched upon in conversation, and all the attention due to Church and State is withdrawn from both, and bestowed on this same Mademoiselle Sontag. Her face is somewhat too square for a beauty, and this sad circumstance distresses the body of fashionables extremely.”

FANNY KEMBLE.

Annual Register,
1829, Chron. 173.

Mademoiselle Sontag did not stay very long; and her bird-like warblings were forgotten in the higher interest of the appearance of another Kemble, the next year. The young Fanny Kemble, then only eighteen, came forward in October, 1829, under circumstances which secured to her beforehand the sympathy of the public, as her name ensured for her a due appreciation of her great talents. She came forward to retrieve her father’s affairs, and those of Covent Garden theatre; and her success was splendid. For two or three seasons, she was the rage. There were always those who, true to art, and loyal to Mrs. Siddons, saw that her niece’s extraordinary popularity could not last, unsustained as it was by the long study, experience, and discipline—to say nothing of the unrivalled genius—of Mrs. Siddons: but the appearance of the young actress was a high treat, though a temporary one, to the London public. She went to America, and married there: and subsequent appearances in England have not revived the enthusiasm which her first efforts excited.

IRVING.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 75.

The dramatic world is not more sure of a constant succession of enthusiasms than the religious. It is at this time, in 1828, that we first hear of that extraordinary man who was soon to turn so many heads, the greater number by a passing excitement, and not a few by actually crazing them. The way in which we first hear of the Rev. Edward Irving is characteristic. It was by the fall of a church in Kirkaldy, from the overcrowding of the people to hear him. The gallery fell, and brought down much ruin with it. Twenty-eight persons were killed on the spot, and one hundred and fifty more or less injured. Among the killed were three young daughters of a widowed mother, who never more lifted up her head, and was laid by their side in a few weeks. What Irving was as a sign of the times we shall have occasion to see hereafter; for, for seven years from this date, and especially during the first half of that period, he was conspicuous in the public eye, and doing what he could, under a notion of duty, to intoxicate the national mind. What he had been up to the first burst of his fame, we know through

the testimony of one who understood him well:—“What the Scottish uncelebrated Irving was they that have only seen the London celebrated (and distorted) one can never know. His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul mine ever came in contact with. I call him, on the whole, the best man I have ever (after trial enough) found in the world, or now hope to find. The first time I saw Irving was six-and-twenty years ago, in his native town, Annan. He was fresh from Edinburgh, with college prizes, high character, and promise. He had come to see our schoolmaster, who had also been his. We heard of famed professors, of high matters classical, mathematical, a whole wonderland of knowledge: nothing but joy, health, hopefulness without end, looked out from the blooming young man.” It was in 1809 that he was this “blooming young man.” The rest of the picture—what he was just before his death, at the age of forty-two—we shall see but too soon.

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Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, iv. 81, 82.

These were times when some such man as Edward Irving was pretty sure to rise up; times certain to excite and to betray any such man who might exist within our borders. The religious world was in an extraordinary state of confusion, with regard both to opinion and conscience. The High Church party was becoming more and more disgusted with the appeals of the day to the vulgar “Protestantism” of the mob, while it was no less alarmed at the concessions made to the popular will on both civil and ecclesiastical matters. The most earnest members of this party were already looking towards each other, and establishing that sort of union which was immediately to cast discredit on the hitherto honoured name of Protestantism, and very soon to originate the “Tracts for the Times.” This party had lost its trust in the Crown; it had no sympathy with parliament, and saw that it must soon be in antagonism with it; and its only hope now was in making a vigorous effort to revive, purify, and appropriate to itself the Church. This exclusive reliance upon the Church appears to have been, as yet, the only new point of sympathy between this party and Rome; but it was enough to set men whispering imputations of Romanism against its members. While such imputations were arising and spreading, the Low Church party were zealous among the Romanists to convert them; and the registers of the time show their great success. Conversions from popery figure largely among the incidents of the few years following Catholic Emancipation: and nothing could be more natural. There were in the Catholic body, as there would be in any religious body so circumstanced, many men who did not know or care very much about matters of faith, or any precise definitions of them, who were of too high and honourable a spirit to desert their church while it was in adversity, who had fought its battles while it was depressed, but were indifferent about being called by its name after it came into possession of its rights. Again, amidst the new intercourse now beginning between Catholics and churchmen, it was natural that both parties, and especially the Catholics, should find more common ground existing than they had previously been aware of; and their sympathy might easily become a real fraternization. Again, there might naturally have been many Catholics constitutionally disposed to a more inward and “spiritual” religion than they received from a priest who might add to the formalism of his church an ignorance or hardness which would disqualify

RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

CONVERSIONS OF CATHOLICS.

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Annual Register,
1828, Chron 69.

him for meeting the needs of such persons. Under these influences we cannot wonder that conversions from popery were numerous at that time; but we may rather wonder what Lord Eldon, and other pious Protestants, thought of a fact so directly in opposition to all their anticipations. Protestantism had its day then, when its self-called champions least expected it; and Popery has had its day since, when the guardians of the Church, or those who considered themselves so, were least prepared for it. An extraordinary incident which occurred in the midst of these conversions was the defence set up by the counsel for the defendants in an action for libel, brought by the Archbishop of Tuam, against the printer and publisher of a newspaper. The libel complained of was an assertion that the Archbishop had offered a Catholic priest £1,000 in cash, and a living of £800 a year, to become a Protestant. Serjeant Taddy declared the allegation to be purely honourable to the archbishop, instead of libellous, as, by a whole series of laws, he was authorized to bestow rewards on Catholics who should submit to conversion; and under this head of his argument he brought forward the atrocious old laws of Queen Anne and the first Georges, by which bribes to Protestantism, on the one hand, were set against penalties for catholicism on the other. The defence was purely ironical; but the judge had to be serious. He pronounced these old laws irrelevant, being Irish; and, not stopping there, declared their intention to be not to bribe, but to grant a provision afterwards to those "who, from an honest conviction of the errors of the Romish church, had voluntarily embraced the purer doctrines of Protestantism."

Life of Arnold,
i. 82.Life of Arnold,
i. 274.

The moderate churchmen, meanwhile, were dissatisfied with the prospect opened by the conflicts of the High and Low Church parties; and some of them began to desire a revision and reconstitution of the whole Establishment. Dr. Arnold writes, "What might not ——— do, if he would set himself to work in the House of Lords, not to patch up this hole or that, but to recast the whole corrupt system, which in many points stands just as it did in the worst time of popery, only reading 'King' or 'Aristocracy,' in the place of 'Pope.'" Again, when disturbed by the moral signs of the times: "I think that the clergy as a body might do much, if they were steadily to observe the evils of the times, and preach fearlessly against them. I cannot understand what is the good of a national Church if it be not to Christianize the nation, and introduce the principles of Christianity into men's social and civil relations, and expose the wickedness of that spirit which maintains the Game Laws, and in agriculture and trade seems to think that there is no such sin as covetousness, and that if a man is not dishonest, he has nothing to do but to make all the profit of his capital that he can."—Men were too busy looking after the faith of everybody else to attend to the moral evils of the times; and yet, no party was satisfied with the Church, or any body of churchmen of its own. This was exactly the juncture to excite and betray Edward Irving.

INTOLERANCE OF
OPINION.

Amidst these diversities of faith, there never was a time when diversity of opinion was less tolerated. Amidst the vehement assertion of Protestantism, its famous right of private judgment was practically as much denied, with impunity and applause, as it could have been under Popish ascendancy. The fact of the illegality of bequests for the encouragement of Popery was brought prominently before the public in 1828, by a claim of the Crown against the

BISHOP OF BLOIS.

Bishop of Blois. The Bishop of Blois had put out a book when resident in England at the beginning of the century, which he believed might serve the cause of religion permanently: and he invested a large sum of money, appointing trustees, who were to pay him the dividends during his life, and apply them after his death to the propagation of his work. It seems as if the Bishop had discovered that his bequest was likely to be set aside as illegal, at the present time of eager controversy; for he petitioned in the Rolls Court that his bequest might be declared illegal and void, and that the stock might be retransferred to himself. But here the Crown interposed, demanding the stock in question, on the ground that the money, having been applied to a superstitious use, was forfeited to the Crown; any proviso of the testator in prevention of such forfeiture being an evasion of the law. The Master of the Rolls, however, decreed justice to the Bishop, giving him back his money, while deciding that he must not put it (in the way of bequest) to such "a superstitious use" as spreading a book in advocacy of the faith that he held. The whole transaction looks like one not belonging to our own century. The laws were ancient: but the use made of them by the Crown, on the plea of the contrariety of the book to the policy of the country, is disheartening to look back upon as an incident of our own time.

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Annual Register,
1828; Chron. 158.

One small advance in religious liberty was, however, made in 1828, when the question was raised whether baptized Jews should be permitted to purchase the freedom of the city of London. In 1785 the Court of Aldermen had made a standing order that this privilege should not be granted to baptized Jews: and an application now, nearly half a century afterwards, by the brothers Saul, who had always been brought up in the Christian faith, though children of Jewish parents, was thought a good opportunity for one more struggle for religious liberty, after the failure of many in the intervening time. Much discussion having been gone through, the old-fashioned order was rescinded, and the petitioners were directed to be sworn in.

Annual Register,
1828, Chron. 27.
DISSENTERS'
MARRIAGES.

Some extraordinary and painful scenes which took place during this period at the marriages of Protestant Dissenters foreshowed the near approach of that relief to conscience which was given by the Dissenters' Marriage Bill. One wedding party after another delivered protests to the officiating clergymen, and declared to persons present their dissent from the language of the service, and that it was under compulsion only that they uttered and received it. One clergyman after another was perplexed what to do; and there was no agreement among them what they should do. One refused to proceed (but was compelled to give way), and another took no notice. One rejected and another received a written protest. Some shortened the service as much as possible; and others inflicted every word with unusual emphasis. Such scandals could not be permitted to endure; and more and more persons saw that the Dissenters must be relieved and silenced by being made free to marry according to their consciences.

Two or three awkward questions arose at this time in our Dependencies on questions of liberty, which were in each case decided in favour of the subject against the government. The East India Company were so rash as to attempt at the same time to coerce the press at Calcutta, and to impose a Stamp Duty, of doubtful legality, when the period of the expiration of their charter was

Annual Register,
1827, pp. 194, 195.
PRESS AT CAL-
CUTTA.

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drawing on. The Council at Calcutta prohibited the publication of any newspaper or other periodical work by any person not licensed by the Governor and Council: and the licenses given were revocable at pleasure. Englishmen were not likely to submit to such restrictions on the liberty of printing, at any distance from home; and the men of Calcutta, after the regulation had been registered there, looked anxiously to see what would be done at Bombay. Two of the three Judges of the Supreme Court of Bombay refused to register the regulation, as contrary to law: and the Calcutta authorities were therefore ignominiously defeated.—And so they were, by the ordinary magistrates, about the same time, on another occasion of equal importance. The government wished to pay the expenses of the Burmese war by a new Stamp Duty, which was pronounced by the whole population of Calcutta unjust and oppressive, and even illegal. All argument of counsel, all petition and remonstrance being found unavailing, the inhabitants resolved to petition parliament. They obtained permission from the Sheriff, as usual, to meet for the purpose: but the Sheriff was visited with a severe reprimand from the Council, and the meeting forbidden.—The next step was to hold a meeting as an aggregate of individuals, instead of in any corporate capacity; and public notice of this intention was given. The Council, while professing to have “no objection” to the inhabitants petitioning parliament (a thing to which they had no more right to object than to the inhabitants getting their dinners), sent an order to the stipendiary magistrates to prevent the meeting, and, if necessary, to disperse the assemblage by force. The magistrates consulted counsel, and finding that each of them would be liable to an action for trespass for disturbing a lawful meeting, they declined acting, and the meeting took place. Here was foreshown some of the future under the new charter.

STAMP DUTY.

PROTECTOR OF SLAVES.

Edinburgh Review, xliii. p. 428.

FIRST SELF-PURCHASED SLAVE.

In 1827, we first hear of the new functionary, the Protector of Slaves, and of proceedings instituted by him. An Order in Council was promulgated in Demerara, in January, 1826, which had, after vehement disputes, been previously promulgated in Trinidad, by which, among other provisions, a Protector of Slaves was ordained to be appointed, who was to be cognizant of all proceedings against slaves, and against persons declared to have injured slaves; and to see that justice was done to the negroes. He was to assert and maintain the right of the slaves to marriage and property; and to look to their claim to emancipation. In 1827, the first claim of a slave to purchase liberty was made in Berbice; and the Protector carried the cause. The opposition set up by the owner of the woman whose case was in question, exhibited the vicious assurance which was an understood characteristic of West India slave-holders. The plea—there, in that spot where marriage among slaves had been a thing unheard of, and where purity of morals was, naturally, equally unknown—was, that the money with which the slave desired to purchase her freedom had been obtained by immoral courses—the woman having had a mulatto child. The plea, odious from its hypocrisy, was rejected on a ground of law. The Protector claimed for himself, as the legal officer concerned, the power of determining whether the money had been honestly earned. He had ascertained that it had been honestly earned. The result was, that the woman and her child were declared free on payment of a sum fixed by appraisers. Thus, not only was a great inroad made on the despotism of slavery, but a prophecy was given forth

Annual Register, 1827, p. 193.

to the whole world, that greater changes were impending. The wedge was in, and the split must widen. In the same year, a treaty for the abolition of the Slave Trade was made with Brazil, the Emperor engaging that the traffic should cease in three years from the ratification of the treaty; after which the act of trading in slaves was to be considered as piracy.

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TREATY WITH
BRAZIL

A proceeding, big with prophecy of the fate of all remnants of feudality, is noticeable in the Scotch High Court of Justiciary in 1827. A gamekeeper of Lord Home being indicted for murder for having set and charged a spring-gun, by which a man was shot dead, the counsel of the accused began his defence by asserting the legality of the act of setting and charging a spring-gun. Certain English judges, Abbott, Bailey, and Best, had delivered an opinion, a few years before, that the act was lawful, and morally defensible. As the practice was abolished in this same year, 1827, we may spare ourselves the pain and shame of citing the arguments—the prejudices under the name of opinions—which English judges could bring themselves to deliver at so late a date as the nineteenth century. The men and their judgments are gibbeted in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*. The Scotch judges now, after hearing full and fair argument, decided against the legality, as well as the morality of the act; and declared the accused liable to prosecution for wilful murder. "The general doctrine of the law, even in England," their lordships agreed, "was, that it will not suffer, with impunity, any crime to be prevented by death; unless the same, if committed, could be punished with death. Poaching would not be so punished. Spring-guns were secret, deadly, and, at the same time, dastardly engines. . . . It was an aggravation that they did in a secret, clandestine, and dastardly manner, what durst not be openly attempted." To ordinary persons, the case always seemed clear enough. The man who set a spring-gun either meant to shoot somebody, or he did not. If he did, he was guilty of murderous intent. If not, why set the gun at all? Much was said, in the days of spring-guns, and very properly, of the number of persons, not poachers, who were shot;—of the constant danger to children, old people gathering sticks, or, as Sydney Smith has it, "some unhappy botanist or lover." But the one point of murderous intent, if any intent at all, is enough—enough to stamp our age with barbarism to the end of time. "If a man is not mad," said Sydney Smith, "he must be presumed to foresee common consequences:" if he puts a bullet into a spring-gun—he must be supposed to foresee that it will kill any poacher who touches the wire—and to that consequence he must stand. We do not suppose all preservers of game to be so bloodily inclined, that they would prefer the death of a poacher to his staying away. Their object is to preserve game; they have no objection to preserve the lives of their fellow-creatures also, if both can exist at the same time; if not, the least worthy of God's creatures must fall—the rustic without a soul—not a Christian partridge—not the immortal pheasant—not the rational woodcock, or the accountable hare." If it appears an idle task to be presenting matters so plain—even after it had long been decided that it was unlawful to kill a dog which is pursuing game in a manor, Lord Ellenborough declaring that "to decide the contrary would outrage reason and sense,"—we can only say that we are presenting a picture of the times under our hand—times when such a remonstrance as this was needed in England. "There is a sort of horror in thinking of a

SPRING GUNS.

Edinburgh Review, vol. xxxv.
pp. 126—130.*Annual Register*,
1827, Chron. 117.

Works, i. 406.

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whole land filled with lurking engines of death—machinations against human life under every green tree—traps and guns in every dusky dell and bosky bourn; the *feræ naturæ*—the lords of manors eyeing their peasantry as so many butts and marks, and panting to hear the click of the trap, and to see the flash of the gun. How any human being, educated in liberal knowledge and Christian feeling, can doom to certain destruction a poor wretch, tempted by the sight of animals that naturally appear to him to belong to one person as well as another, we are at a loss to conceive. We cannot imagine how he could live in the same village, and see the widow and orphans of the man whose blood he had shed for such a trifle. We consider a person who could do this to be deficient in the very elements of morals—to want that sacred regard to human life which is one of the corner-stones of civil society. If he sacrifices the life of a man for his mere pleasures, he would do so, if he dared, for the lowest and least of his passions. He may be defended, perhaps, by the abominable injustice of the Game Laws—though we think and hope he is not. But there rests upon his head, and there is marked in his account, the deep and indelible sin of *blood-guiltiness*.” This is the deep and indelible sin which is marked in the account of the nation, under the head of its Game-defences, till, as before recorded, Lord Suffield obtained a parliamentary prohibition of man-traps and spring-guns, in the session of 1827.

SOCIETY FOR THE
DIFFUSION OF USE-
FUL KNOWLEDGE.

As a winding-up of the improvements of this period, and in rank the very first, we must mention the systematic introduction of cheap literature, for the benefit of the working classes. A series or two of cheap works had been issued before; chiefly of entertaining books, meant for the middle classes: and there was never any deficiency of infamous halfpenny trash, hawked about the streets, and sold in low shops. The time had now arrived for something very different from either of these kinds of literature to appear.

Immediately upon the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes, it was found that the deficiency of attainable books in science and literature was a serious misfortune. Men can learn little from lectures, unless they can follow up their subjects by reading: and hearty efforts were made to collect libraries, and form reading societies. These efforts convinced all concerned in them in two facts: that books were dreadfully expensive, and that many that were eminently wanted did not exist:—elementary treatises on scientific subjects, by which students might be introduced into the comprehension of a new subject by a more rational method than through a wilderness of technical terms. The friends of popular enlightenment began, upon this, to consider whether the want could not be supplied; whether works truly elementary could not be issued so cheaply as to meet the needs of the members of Mechanics' Institutes; and in April, 1825, Mr. Brougham, Lord John Russell, Dr. Lushington, Mr. Crawford, William Allen, and others, formed themselves into a society, under the name of the “Society for Promoting the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.” Large subscriptions were offered, and all looked promising, when the commercial convulsions of the time stopped the progress of the work; and little more was done than in the way of preparation, till November, 1826, when Mr. Brougham assembled the friends of the enterprise, and the organization of the society was completed. The issue of works began on the 1st of March, 1827, in the form of pamphlets of unexampled cheapness; and the publication was continued

Edinburgh Re-
view, xlv. 235.

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fortnightly for a long period. The subscriptions declined when the society was once fairly in operation; and, after the first year, it was mainly supported by the sale of its works. The society was incorporated by a charter, in 1832, and before the virtual expiration of its efforts and powers, it had done great service to the existing generation, though not precisely (as happens with almost all social enterprises) to the extent, or in the mode, contemplated. The profession (and no doubt the intention) was to teach the elements of all the sciences—moral as well as natural; politics, jurisprudence, and universal history, as well as physical science. As Mr. Brougham said, in his "Treatise on Popular Education," "Why should not political, as well as all other works, be published in a cheap form, and in numbers?" and he proceeded to assign good reasons why they should: but it was not done. In the laudatory and exulting notice of the operations of the society, some months after its works were spread over the kingdom, the *Edinburgh Review* slides in a hint: "We trust, however, that the appearance of the ethical and political treatises will not be unnecessarily delayed." They never came: and the consequences to the society and to the public were very serious—too serious to be passed over without grave mention. Some of the leading promoters of this society became the rulers of the country a short time afterwards. Those whom they had invited to be their readers were aware of their own lack of political and historical knowledge; and that this knowledge was, at that period of our history, of the highest importance to them. They desired it, and asked for it: it was promised to them, but not given. It was promised by men about to enter into office; and when they were in office it was not given. While a vast change was taking place in the constitution, and a multitude of men were eager to learn the history and bearings of this change, they were put off with treatises on dynamics and the polarization of light. Explanations of the fact might, perhaps, be easily given; but the fact was injurious to the spread of the knowledge which the society was willing to afford. The calm observers of the time presently saw that the position of the Whig ministry, after the passage of the Reform Bill, was seriously affected by the popular persuasion, whether right or wrong, that the Whigs desired to preclude them from political knowledge. So much for what this important association failed to effect. It is very animating to observe and note what it achieved.

The actual distribution of tens of thousands of copies of works of a high quality, is by no means the leading fact of this case—great as it is. A more important one is the raising of the popular standard of requirement in literature and science. It is no small matter to have issued the Penny Magazine at the rate of nearly 200,000 copies per week: but it is a greater to have driven out of the market the vast amount of trash to which the Penny Magazine was preferred. The society's Almanac is a great boon: but a part of the good is, that it excluded the absurd old-world almanacs, and immediately caused an improvement in those issued by the Stationers' Company. Other Cyclopædias and Family Libraries followed upon the different series issued by the society; and the Christian Knowledge Committee set up their Saturday Magazine, after the model of the Penny Magazine. There being (as provided by the charter) no division of profits in the society, the gains from their more popular works went to set up works of great value which could not possibly pay: such as

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their Statistics of the British Empire. A reduction in the cost of maps generally followed the appearance of the society's Atlas. When to these great benefits we add the consideration of the value of the works published—the Penny Cyclopædia, the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, the Journal of Education, the Gallery of Portraits, the Geographical and Astronomical Maps, with many a series besides, we shall see that the institution of this society was an important feature of its times, and one of the honours belonging to the reign of George IV. It did not succeed in all its professed objects: it did not give to the operative classes of Great Britain a library of the elements of all sciences: it omitted some of the most important of the sciences, and with regard to some others presented anything rather than the elements. It did not fully penetrate the masses that most needed aid. But it established the principle and precedent of cheap publication (cheapness including goodness), stimulated the demand for sound information, and the power and inclination to supply that demand; and marked a great era in the history of popular enlightenment. Bodies of men are never so wise and so good as their aggregate of individual wisdom and goodness pledges them to be: and this society disappointed the expectations of the public, and of their own friends, in many ways: but this was because the conception and its earliest aspirations were so noble as they were: and it is with the conception and original aspiration, that, in reviewing the spirit of the period, we have to do. Any work suggested is sure to find doers—one set, if not another: it is the suggestion that is all-important in the history of the time.*

DEATH OF THE
QUEEN OF WIR-
TEMBERG.

Within two years after the death of the Duke of York, happened that of his sister, the Queen of Wirtemberg, the eldest daughter of George III. After she became the second wife of the King of Wirtemberg, she had little connection with England; and the tidings of her death were chiefly interesting as reminding men that one generation was passing away, and another coming. She died on the 6th of October, 1828, in her sixty-third year.

MR. TIERNEY.

In January, 1830, a death happened in the political world, which occasioned extraordinary relief to all dull, or indolent, or in any way incapable or unworthy members of the House of Commons. Mr. Tierney, the castigator—the unrelenting satirist of incapacity and unworthiness in any sort of functionary—died suddenly on the 25th of that month. He had long been known to be suffering under an organic disease of the heart: and he was found, dead and cold, sitting in his chair in the attitude of sleep. The most notorious single event in the political life of Mr. Tierney, was his duel with Mr. Pitt, in 1798, the fault of which appears to have lain wholly with Mr. Pitt, who charged Mr. Tierney with “a wish to impede the service of the country,” and refused to retract, when time and opportunity were afforded. Both parties left the ground unharmed. Mr. Tierney was generally regarded as a sort of concentrated parliamentary opposition; but he was in office for short periods, at different times of his life; first, as Treasurer of the Navy under Mr. Addington, in 1803, and last, as Master of the Mint under Mr. Canning, in 1827. He represented many places in parlia-

* I am obliged to refer the reader to the Preface for a notice properly belonging to this period, which I am precluded, much to my regret, from entering upon here, in its proper place.—H. M.

ment during his political life of forty-two years; and died member for Knaresborough.

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It was in May of the same year that Sir Robert Peel, the father of the minister, died at the age of eighty. He was originally a cotton manufacturer; and in that business he early obtained great wealth, which enabled him to become an extensive landed proprietor, a benefactor to the borough of Tamworth, where his influence soon transcended that of the Townshends, and a member of parliament who discharged his function well. He was an able and conscientious public man, and blessed in his domestic relations, dying in the midst of a family of above fifty descendants. His politics were high Tory. He considered the National Debt a national blessing, believed everything to be right that was done by Mr. Pitt, and was unable so to perceive that the times were changing as to take any pleasure in the political acts of his son during the last two or three years of his life. His life was interesting as an indication of the greatness of the career laid open to ability and industry, under favouring circumstances, in our country; and his death was interesting, not only as conferring title and increased wealth on his illustrious son, but as giving him that freedom of speculation and action which had necessarily been more or less restrained of late by virtuous filial regards.

SIR R. PEEL

Two great Indian officers, both Scotch by birth, died in 1828 and the following year—Sir David Baird and Sir Thomas Munro. Sir David Baird had been one of Tippoo Saib's prisoners, chained by the leg in a dungeon: after which he lived to receive the thanks of parliament four times—for his services in India, in 1799: in Egypt in 1803; in the Danish expedition in 1807; and in the Peninsula in 1809, after the battle of Corunna, at which time he was made a baronet. He had been Governor of Fort George two years when he died, on the 18th of August, 1829.—Sir Thomas Munro was Governor of Madras at the time of his death, which happened by a sudden attack of cholera in July 1828. Having spent his life in Indian service, he was anxious to return to England in 1823, but was entreated by the Directors to remain. He received his baronetcy in 1825. Capable in every way as he had shown himself to be as a soldier, his most eminent services were wrought in a nobler field, in settling, governing, and fostering one conquered province after another that was put under his charge. His just and humane government was his highest title to honour.

SIR DAVID BAIRD.

SIR THOMAS
MUNRO.

Two African explorers died within this period—Mr. Salt, on the 30th of October, 1828; and Major Laing, at some time not perfectly known, but supposed to be during the autumn of 1826. Major, then Lieutenant Laing, having been sent with his regiment to Sierra Leone, experienced the passion for African exploration, which has proved fatal to so many brave adventurers in all times; and, after various expeditions on political business to tribes residing not far from the western coasts, he was made happy by an appointment to proceed, viâ Tripoli, to Timbuctoo, in order to ascertain the course of the Niger. By that time the discoveries of Denham and Clapperton had roused much expectation and ambition, which it was Major Laing's hope to gratify. On the 14th of July, 1825, he married the daughter of the British Consul at Tripoli, and two days after set forth on the expedition from which he never returned. There is a good deal of mystery about his fate. On the

MAJOR LAING.

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21st of September he wrote from Timbuctoo the last letter ever received from him; and in this letter, which conveys an impression of discomfort and danger, he declares his intention of leaving the great town the next morning. He was well satisfied with his own views about the course of the Niger, and declared himself laden with information, from "records" which were "abundant" at Timbuctoo. Of all this he promised to write from Sego, in two or three weeks; but nothing more was heard of him but from some Arabs, whose testimony could not be relied on. All agreed that he was killed, and that his property was stolen; but where, in that fearful desert, his bones are whitening, and what was done with his effects, no real knowledge has ever been obtained.—

MR. SALT.

Mr. Salt was the companion of Lord Valentia in his eastern travels, and he published his drawings, by which Lord Valentia's work is illustrated in a valuable manner. His familiarity with oriental customs and languages caused him to be selected by the government for a mission to Abyssinia, to carry presents to the Emperor, and afterwards to be our Consul-General in Egypt. He died at a village between Cairo and Alexandria, after having added much to our knowledge of eastern countries. He was a native of Lichfield, and received his education at the grammar-school of that city.

DR. KITCHENER.

Among the promoters of the useful arts who died during this period, we find one strange humorist—Dr. Kitchener, whose name was supposed to be an assumed one by a multitude who had read his cookery-books, without being aware that he had written upon optics and music before he committed himself to gastronomic science. We say "read his cookery-books," because it is impossible not to read them, if one looks at them at all, so full are they of sense and appropriate learning, and of sly fun. Dr. Kitchener was educated at Eton and Glasgow, was nominally a physician, but did not trouble himself about practice, as he had an independent fortune, and bad health. He suffered under complicated disease for many years before his death, which happened when he was fifty years of age, suddenly, from a spasmodic affection of the heart. It was his state of disease, and not epicurism, which made him so refined a teacher of the laws of luxury. The laws of luxury were, in his opinion, involved in those of health; and he taught both together, to the great advantage of a multitude of readers, numerous beyond computation. He amused himself with experiments in cookery; and was to the last degree exact about the preparation of his food: but with him this was an intellectual pursuit, followed up with an aim; his own habits being regular, and even abstemious, except on occasion, when an attack of peculiar disease caused a craving for an enormous quantity, according to his own account, of animal food. His chief delight was in music, and he was a student of natural philosophy. As he is probably the only man who will ever give us the overflowings of a scientific and gentlemanly mind in the form of witty cookery books, he should find a place in the records of his time. He died in February, 1827.

SAMUEL OLDKNOW.

In the next year, died the man to whom chiefly our country owes the introduction of the muslin manufacture;—Mr. Samuel Oldknow, who reached his seventy-second year. When quite a young man, he tried the experiment of manufacturing muslin handkerchiefs at Anderton, near Bolton, in Lancashire. In a few years, he established a great manufactory at Stockport, and

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afterwards at Mellor, in Derbyshire. The results were that, as regarded himself, he grew rich and became a great landed proprietor and agriculturist,—being President of the Derby Agricultural Society at the time of his death: and, as regards the public, that the manufacture is now brought to such a point of perfection, that we can bring cotton from India, make it into muslins rivalling those of India themselves, and sell them in India at a lower price than the native fabric can be sold for on the spot. Mr. Oldknow had the energy and perseverance which invariably distinguish public benefactors of his order. He seldom saw a muslin dress in any drawing-room, of a pattern that was new to him, but he had the pattern, with improvements, in the loom the next day. It was a great benefit and blessing to his mind that he could interest himself in agricultural pursuits. The penalty which improvers in the useful arts usually have to pay for their privilege is that they cannot rid themselves of their object: as an eminent ribbon-designer was heard to say that it was the plague of his life that he saw ribbons everywhere—ribbons in the winter fire—ribbons in the summer evening clouds—and wherever there was form and colour. Mr. Oldknow must have dropped his muslins when in his farm-yard, and among his crops.

The great printer, Luke Hansard, died in 1828, at the age of seventy-six. LUKE HANSARD. His father, a Norwich manufacturer, had died early in embarrassed circumstances. At the end of his apprenticeship to the printing-business, Luke Hansard went to London, with one guinea in his pocket. The very next time that he had a guinea in his pocket, he sent it to Norwich to pay a debt of his father's—his father having then been dead some years. Mr. Hughs of Great Turnstile was then, in 1774, printer to the House of Commons; and Luke Hansard became a compositor in his office. In two years he was made a partner: and from that time his career, as sketched in the Report of a Committee of the House of Commons on Parliamentary Printing (1828), was nothing short of illustrious. He improved the extent and quality of the parliamentary printing beyond what had been dreamed of. Employed by Mr. Orme in printing his *History of India*, he informed himself so thoroughly on Indian subjects, that he was Burke's right hand in selecting evidence from Indian documents for the trial of Warren Hastings.—It was he who supplied without delay, and without the commission of an error, the unequalled demand for Burke's *Essay on the French Revolution*. Dr. Johnson secured him for his printer: and Porson pronounced him the most accurate of Greek printers. When Mr. Pitt was perplexed how to get the Report of the Secret Committee on the French Revolution printed under such impossible conditions as his own illegible hand-writing, extreme haste, and absolute secrecy, Luke Hansard promised that the thing should be done; and the Minister was amazed by the sight of the proof-sheets early the next morning. After the Union with Ireland, the parliamentary printing increased so much that Mr. Hansard declined all private business except during the parliamentary recess, when he liked to have it, to keep his great corps together, and in practice. His great corps once thought they had him and his affairs in their own hands. In no business could a strike of workmen be more fatal than in this; and in 1805, when strikes were the fashion, Hansard's men thought themselves sure of any wages they chose to ask. But they did not yet know their employer. The greater

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the danger, the better prepared was such a man to meet it. He had foreseen the event, and had devised plans, and taught them to his sons, by which the art of printing might, by extreme subdivision of employment, be practised by untrained hands. He let his workmen go; picked up great numbers of unemployed men from the streets and stable-yards, put on a working jacket, and, with his sons, went from one to another, showing how the business was to be done, and aiding in it. He was an early riser: and his plan—so original, so various, and so singularly successful—were made in the clearness and coolness of the morning, before those were awake who were to execute his schemes. He was little seen out of the range of his business; and that business was of so wide a range as to afford constant exercise to all the faculties of his mind. It united the interests of the scholar, the literary man, and the politician, with those of the vast mechanism of his business. He had the excellent health which is the natural privilege of men who work the whole of the brain equably and diligently,—the faculties which relate to the body, the intellect, and the affections. Up to the age of seventy-five, he felt no change in his powers; nor was any failure apparent to his friends. At that time he experienced paralysis of the left eye. It disappeared; but when the business of the session began, he declared his conviction that this would be his last season of regular work; but that he would work on while Parliament sat. And so he did; and he had the gratification of printing the Report on Printing in which his labours are immortalized. When this was done, and parliament rose, he felt himself sinking, and summoned to his presence the principal persons in his establishment, taking a solemn leave of them, and declaring his belief that he should see them no more. We cannot but hope that some of them knew how he came to London, and what he did with his first spare guinea.—He died a few weeks after this leave-taking, saying farewell to each member of his family individually, explaining what provision he had made for them, and offering to each his blessing and a parting gift.—Such was the life of Luke Hansard, which speaks for itself. The particulars given will not be too many for those who, hearing the name of Hansard incessantly, may not be aware how it came to be connected with the printed Debates of the Lords and Commons of England.

PHILIP RUNDSELL.

Just at the time when George III. came to the throne, a youth belonging to Bath was apprenticed to a jeweller there;—a youth of high spirit, little industry, a strong love of pleasure, good talents, and especially a remarkably refined taste, which contrived to show itself before he knew anything of Art. When this gay lad heard of the accession of the young king, and of the splendours of the coronation, he little dreamed how much he should hereafter have to do with this king and all his family; nor how it would be his own industry that would make a way for him into the royal presence and employment. This somewhat harum-scarum youth, apt to go into a violent passion, apt to sing and dance rather than to work, was Philip Rundell, who was to die one of the richest and best-known men in England. A new apprentice came into the business at Bath, a few months before he left it, to be trained to take his place; and the new apprentice's name was Bridge. Here we have the Rundell and Bridge, whose firm is known all over Europe. Never were two men more unlike than Mr. Rundell and Mr. Bridge; yet the partnership turned out admirably, by

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their undertaking different departments. Mr. Rundell studied art, *con amore*, became an unequalled judge of diamonds, and worked indefatigably—absolutely revelling in the gratification afforded by his business to his intellect and taste, when once it had expanded to a point which satisfied his desires. He was very irascible; but his people knew him, and revered his generosity, through his bursts of temper. No one ever left his employment on account of his temper. But he was not the man to go about for orders among the great—always excepting the royal family. Mr. Bridge, amiable, gentlemanly, and as able in his way as his partner, undertook this part of his business. And he sacrificed no independence by it. On matters of taste in their department, Messrs. Rundell and Bridge were called on to advise, and not to be dictated to. If it is asked how they reached this point of eminence, the only answer is, that they won it. Mr. Rundell was placed by his relations as a partner in the ancient jewellery establishment of the Golden Salmon, on Ludgate Hill; and there, if he had been an ordinary man, he might merely have made a competence, as an ordinary jeweller in a respectable house. When the senior partner retired, leaving his money in the concern, Mr. Rundell invited Mr. Bridge to be his partner. In liberality of views the partners were one. They studied, and they largely bought, pictures, statues, gems—every species of antique beauty that they could obtain access to: and that they obtained access to so many as they did in those days of continental warfare, is a proof of their zeal in the pursuit of peaceful art. It was for the sake of art that they executed their celebrated Shield of Achilles. It was not ordered: it was not likely ever to be bought. But they communicated their idea to Mr. Flaxman, and paid him £620 for his model and drawing of the shield. George IV. and the Duke of York, and two noblemen, had each a cast of this shield, in silver gilt: and the jewellers now stood before the world as artists; and they gathered into their establishment all the talent, foreign as well as native, which promised to advance their art. It was about 1797 that they became diamond-jewellers to the royal family, on the retirement of their predecessor; and Mr. Rundell retired from business in 1823; so that his intercourse with royalty extended over twenty-six years; and a long time that was to be handling and taking care of many of the finest jewels in the world. He was in the habit of giving away money freely. To persons out of the line of relationship, he gave sums not exceeding £200: and he is supposed to have given away about £10,000 in this manner. To his relations he presented gifts varying from £500 to £20,000: and in this way he distributed about £145,000 during his life. Besides this, he settled annuities on a considerable number of persons, that he might not keep them waiting till his death: and at last, he left property far exceeding a million. It was not the money that it brought, nor yet the fame, which made his success in life precious to him. It was the high gratification of his faculties and taste. And he enjoyed this long; for he had worked well during the last two-thirds of his life. His mind remained clear to the last; and he was eighty when he died, on the 17th of February, 1827.

His life carries us over from the department of the useful arts to that of Art, properly so called. But first we must note the melancholy case of the engineer to whom we owe the design for Waterloo Bridge, and the institution of steam-passage from London to Margate and to Richmond. Mr. George Dodd was

GEORGE DODD.

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the son of Mr. Ralph Dodd, who effected some excellent engineering in his day. His unhappy son, in his best years, revived the idea of the Strand Bridge; and on its being seriously undertaken was appointed resident engineer, with a salary of £1,000 a year. This situation he hastily resigned: but he received £5,000 in all from the Company. His habits, however, put prosperity out of the question, great as were his talents. Those whom he had served could not save him from himself; and he lived to be brought up to the Mansion-house as a drunken pauper. He asked for a week in prison, after which he would begin life afresh. He was taken care of in the infirmary of the prison; but he rejected medicine and advice, and sank at the end of the week, killed by intemperance, at the age of only forty-four. He died in September, 1827.

THOMAS HOLLOWAY.

In the preceding March died a patient artist who had devoted thirty years of incessant labour to engraving the Cartoons of Raffaele. Thomas Holloway was scarcely heard of as an engraver till a book came out which presently became the rage—Dr. Hunter's translation of Lavater, for which Holloway had engraved seven hundred plates. He was made historical engraver to the King; and when he was about fifty, applied himself to the great work of the Cartoons, six of which were nearly completed, and the seventh begun, when he died, in the eightieth year of his age. What a succession is here of men engaged in virtuous and intellectual toil, who lived in health, and died in a clear and serene old age!

MRS. DAMER.

Many people have seen the bust of Nelson which is placed in the Common Council-room at Guildhall, and the bust of Sir Joseph Banks at the British Museum; and the colossal heads of Thames and Isis on Henley Bridge; and some know the statue of George III. at the Register Office at Edinburgh. These are all works of the Hon. Mrs. Damer, whose father was the General Conway (afterwards Field Marshal) to whom the largest share of Horace Walpole's correspondence was addressed. To this lady Horace Walpole left Strawberry-hill, with £2,000 to keep it in repair, on condition that she lived there, and did not dispose of it to any one but his great-niece, Lady Waldegrave. Mrs. Damer's marriage was unhappy; and her husband destroyed himself nine years after their union. She had no children; and from the time of her husband's death, she applied herself to the study and practice of art. She went to Rome for improvement, and returned to be the acknowledged head of amateur sculpture in Europe. She was always at work; and her work is in many great houses, valued as her gift, as well as for real merit. One of her last achievements was a bust of Nelson, which she sculptured for the King of Tanjore, at the request of her relative, Sir Alexander Johnston, then governor of Ceylon. Great was the sensation excited when the bust reached its destination; and its reception by the gazing multitude was such as to encourage further attempts to foster the artistic faculties of the natives of our dependencies. Mrs. Damer directed that her apron and tools should be buried with her. Let us hope that her example does not lie buried with them. She was in her eightieth year, and died on the 28th of May, 1828.

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Another amateur-artist, better known as a patron of art, who died during this period, was Sir George Howland Beaumont, the friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom Sir Joshua left his picture (by Sebastian Bourdon) of the

Return of the Ark. This picture Sir George Beaumont presented, with fifteen others, to the National Gallery, a short time before his death. He was in parliament for one session: but his heart was in private life—in his home, his painting, and his friends. He was a liberal and judicious patron of art and artists; and the idea we form of him from Wordsworth's Works, the Life of Wilkie, and other pictures of the time, is genial and endearing. He was one of those whose pursuits and tenor of life promise and deserve old age. He was seventy-three when he died, and then his death was from an attack of erysipelas. The event happened on the 7th of February, 1827.

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George Dawe, the painter, died in 1829. The latter part of his life was spent on the continent, and most of his works were done there, as he was first painter to the Emperor of Russia. He was a Royal Academician; and a picture of his, the Demoniac, hangs in the Council-room of the Academy. He realized a very large fortune at St. Petersburg, but died in England, and was buried at St. Paul's. The Russian Ambassador and Sir Thomas Lawrence led the pall-bearers.

Only three months afterwards, Sir Thomas Lawrence was himself carried to burial in St. Paul's with as much pomp as rank and wealth can contribute to the honour of genius. Great as Sir Thomas Lawrence was, the abiding impression of him is and will be, that he was not all that nature intended him to be. His early promise was most marvellous. At six years old he took crayon likenesses, those of Lord and Lady Kenyon still existing to show the wonderful spirit the child could put into his drawings, which were also strong likenesses. At the age of eight he saw a Rubens—the first good picture he had ever seen. He could not leave it; and when he was fetched away, he sighed, "Ah! I shall never be able to paint like that!" At ten he painted historical pictures; and one especially—Christ reproving Peter—manifested such promise as makes it a matter of infinite regret that he spent his life in painting portraits, even though that life establishes a new era in portrait painting in England. At thirteen he received from the Society of Arts, for his copy of the Transfiguration, the great silver gilt palette, and a premium of five guineas: and yet at sixteen he was very near going upon the stage. There was something to be said for this fancy. He was full of personal beauty, grace, activity, and accomplishments: a hearty lover of Shakspeare, and a wonderfully fine dramatic reader. He was also very intimate with the Kembles. Indeed, he was early engaged to a daughter of Mrs. Siddons; but the father doubted the prudence of the connection, and the young lady afterwards died. Thus far Lawrence had studied under Mr. Hoare at Bath—an artist of exquisite taste, who fostered the boy's powers. At seventeen Lawrence's father took him to London, and petitioned for an interview with Sir Joshua Reynolds. Sir Joshua was manifestly struck on the instant with the extraordinary beauty and manners of the youth, and gave close attention, during a long silence, to the young artist's first attempt in oils—a picture of Christ bearing the Cross. It was an anxious pause for both father and son: and the son at least thought that all was over, and that he should never be a painter, when Sir Joshua found fault with his colouring in many particulars. It was Sir Joshua's way, however, to get all the fault-finding done first, and then to praise; and this was what

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he was doing now. When he had raised the lad's spirits again, he said, impressively but mildly, "It is very clear you have been copying the old masters: but my advice to you is to study *Nature*. Apply your talents to nature, and don't *copy* paintings." Then followed an invitation to call whenever he liked; and the great man's kindness never failed during the four years that he continued to live. Lawrence succeeded him in his office of principal painter in ordinary to the King. Honours were showered upon him, from this time, and wealth flowed in, to be immediately dispersed in acts of generosity, or by habits of carelessness. He never married; he made money at an unequalled rate; yet he was never rich. Of course, it was said that he gamed: but this was so far from being true, that he conscientiously abstained from billiards (at which he had never played for money), because his fine play occasioned immoderate betting; and he thought it as wrong to occasion gambling in others as to game himself. At Christmas, 1829, he consulted a friend about insuring his life for £5,000, and resolved to effect the insurance on the 8th of January; but on the 7th he was dead.—Between 1792 and 1818 he was painting the portraits of half the aristocracy of England: and then he was called to paint the royalty of Europe. The Regent sent him to the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, to paint the potentates there assembled; and he proceeded afterwards to various Courts to complete his commission. He had never been abroad before—had never seen Rome, nor even the pictures that Paris had to show. Before his return he was elected, on the death of West, President of the Royal Academy. After his return he went on portrait painting to the time of his death. His service to art was in idealizing portraits. He had that *bonhomme* of genius which showed him at once not only the best side of whatever human phenomenon met his eye, but all that a face and figure were capable of being under the best influences: and that ideal he had power to present. His portraits of children are beautiful beyond parallel. His own face and manner were most attractive to children. They would hang upon his neck, and sit on his knee to be fed; and their antics in his painting-room were as free as in the fields: and not a trait of frolic or grace ever escaped him. We have a myriad such traits, caught at a glance, and fixed down for ever. At Christmas, 1829, as we have seen, Sir Thomas Lawrence believed himself, as he then said, likely to attain a good old age. He declared his health to be perfect, except that at night his head and eyes were heated, so that he was glad to bathe them. On Saturday, January 2nd, he dined, with Wilkie and others, at Mr. Peel's. On Tuesday, though not feeling very well, he was busy at the new Athenæum Club-house, about whose interior decoration he was much interested. On Wednesday, the 6th, he wrote a note to his sister, to say that he could not dine with her on Thursday, but would come on Friday—the day he meant to insure his life. On Thursday evening, being better than for some days before, he received two friends, with whom he conversed very cheerfully. Before they had left the house they heard a cry from his servant, which made them return to the room, where they found him dead in his chair. He had told his servant that he was very ill—that he must be dying. His disease was ascertained to be extensive ossification of the heart. He was sixty years of age.

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actress, of whom our grandfathers could not speak without enthusiasm. This lady, become Countess of Derby, died in April, 1829. Among her captives she reckoned Charles James Fox, who spent evening after evening behind the scenes at Drury Lane: but there was no coquetry on the lady's part. She became the second wife of the Earl of Derby in 1797; was received at Court; and, to the end of her days, was considered the most accomplished lady in the peerage. It may be a question whether, under the happiest domestic circumstances, it is wise to exchange the excitement of artistic life for the level dullness of aristocratic existence: but Miss Farren's case is a proof that it may be done without scandal, or open bad consequences: and all will agree that, supposing an opening to aristocratic life to be a good thing, artistic genius is a nobler avenue than the commoner one of wealth.

Before this time, and for some years afterwards, there was a good deal of HAMILTON. disputation going forward as to the best method of learning a foreign language; whether in the old plodding way by grammar and dictionary, or by the new method of Mr. Hamilton—by interlinear translations, in which each foreign word was placed above or below the equivalent English one. The dispute at times ran high, the advocates of each method not seeing that both may be good in their way. If people found that they could, by Mr. Hamilton's means, learn to read a foreign language more speedily and easily than by beginning with the grammar, they would certainly become Hamiltonians, whatever their opponents had to say to the contrary: and if parents wished to give their children a thorough grammatical knowledge of a foreign language, they would put the grammar and dictionary before them, as of old. A great number too would use both methods at once—the ancient for a knowledge of the construction, the modern for a knowledge of the idiom, and of its affinity with their mother tongue. In the midst of the controversy, and of great success, Mr. James Hamilton, author of the Hamiltonian system, died, at the age of fifty-nine, in September, 1829.

Of men of letters, there died during this period, William Gifford: Professor WM. GIFFORD. Jardine: Mitford the historian: and Professor Dugald Stewart.—Gifford's career was a remarkable one. He worked his way upwards from the lowest condition of fortune and education; his spirit and his love of knowledge being indomitable. He became known, when cabin-boy of a ship, to a surgeon of Ashburton, Mr. Cookesley, who so exerted his interest and his own generosity as to send the aspiring boy to Oxford. Earl Grosvenor afterwards took him into his house, to be tutor to his son. He was intimate with Canning, and became the editor of the Anti-jacobin: and afterwards, for a long course of years, of the Quarterly Review, which he edited from its origin in 1809 till within two years of his death. His learning, his industry, his literary taste, his unscrupulousness as a partisan, and his intense bigotry, all favoured him in making the Quarterly Review what it was;—worthy of immortality for its literary articles, and sure of an undesirable immortality as a monument of the extreme Toryism of its day,—with all its insolence, all its selfishness, unscrupulousness, and destitution of philosophy. Cold and cruel as Gifford was in his political and satirical writings, he had a warm heart for gratitude and for friendship. He was generous in his transactions, and courteous in his manners: and he thus won a cordial affection from his friends, while he

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PROFESSOR JARDINE.

WM. MITFORD.

DUGALD STEWART.

provoked a feeling of an adverse kind from the public at large. He left a considerable portion of his property to a member of Mr. Cookesley's family; and died on the last day of the year 1826, at the age of seventy.—Professor Jardine, who taught Logic at Glasgow College, and won to himself the respect and affection of a wide circle of eminent men, once his pupils, died, at the age of eighty-four, on the 28th of January, 1827.—Mitford, the historian of Greece, reached the age of eighty-three, and died in February of the same year. His History was universally read, and celebrated accordingly, in its early days; but this was mainly because it was uncontroverted and left unrivalled. Since the great recent expansion of the philosophy of history, Mitford's work has fallen into discredit, from which it is not likely to recover.—Professor Dugald Stewart is never spoken of by those who knew him without affection and admiration, on account of the amiability and charm of his character and manners. He early devoted himself to metaphysical speculation, and became the most popular lecturer on Mental Philosophy ever known in this country. For a long course of years, his lecture-room was crowded; and his circle of pupils was enlarged indefinitely by his frequent publication of his lectures, under one form or another. The service that he rendered to philosophy was, however, confined to that of interesting a wide public in the subjects which occupied his mind. He added nothing to the science which he undertook to teach; but rather drew away from the track of real science many minds which might have followed it, if they had not been enticed by the graces of his desultory learning into a wilderness where he indicated no path at all. No comprehensive principle is to be found amidst the whole mass of his works; no firm ground under his speculations; no substance beneath his illustrations. Nothing that he wrote under the name of philosophy could cohere for a moment under the test of science. And the science was already abroad,—the strong breeze which was to drive before it the mists of mere speculation. Prince Metternich, who, whatever had been his political sins, understood and appreciated as well as any man the nature and benefits of true science, had before this time, when Austrian ambassador at the French Court, guaranteed to Dr. Gall the expenses of the publication of his work on the Functions of the Brain: a work which has already begun to change the aspect of both medical science and mental philosophy throughout the civilized world. Dr. Gall's work had been prohibited (as first-rate scientific achievements are apt to be everywhere) by the government at Vienna in 1802. In 1810, Prince Metternich himself had secured its presentation to the world. Before the close of the war, it had begun to modify the views of physicians and philosophers abroad: and soon after the war, when continental ideas began to reach Great Britain, the scientific discoveries of Dr. Gall were heard of in England; and they received in Scotland, before the death of Dugald Stewart, that primary homage of outrageous abuse from partizans of old systems, which invariably precedes an ultimate general reception. The noise reached the placid man; but it did not disturb him. He had lived a long and tranquil life—amused with speculation, undisturbed by difficulties which were not apparent to him, unspoiled by adulation, unabashed by the excess of his popularity, cherished by family and friends, and undoubting about the permanence of his works.—Those works it is impossible to characterize, in

any philosophical sense: for no basis is assigned for them; and no proof of any part of them is anywhere offered. The most positive part of them is a protest, sometimes expressed, sometimes implied, against the philosophy of Locke. They contain some recognition of facts of the mind which there is no attempt to account for; and much desultory information and disquisition which are entertaining to read; and would be more so if the reader could forget his constant unsatisfied craving for that analysis and reasoning which are always professed in the mere undertaking of such subjects, but are in the writings of Dugald Stewart nowhere to be found. He reached the age of seventy-four, and died in June, 1828,—two months before the great German physician and philosopher who was to extinguish the will-o'-the-wisps which, in the name of the Scotch philosophy, had beguiled multitudes while the continent and its science was closed to us. Dr. Gall died in the neighbourhood of Paris, aged seventy-one, on the 22nd of August, 1828.

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A young man died during this period, whose name perhaps should be mentioned on account of the popularity of a poem which he published; such popularity, won by such a poem, being a curious sign of the times. The Rev. Robert Pollok, who had been educated at Glasgow, issued a long poem, called "the Course of Time," which immediately went through many editions, in spite of faults so offensive, and such an extraordinary absence of merits, as completely perplexed all the authoritative literary critics of the day. The truth seems to be that Mr. Pollok's readers and admirers were the whole of that great and opulent body called, in common conversation, the religious world—the great body which has a conscientious objection to the cultivation of taste by familiarity with the best models in art and literature; with whom music is objectionable, as "exciting the passions," painting as "frivolous," and Shakspeare and our other classics as "profane." When a novel—Hannah More's *Cœlebs*—came in the way of this portion of the public, a novel which they might read, they carried it through a succession of editions presently; and now that a poem had come in their way, a poem that they might read, they devoured it so ravenously as to set the world and the reviews of the day wondering how it might be. The young author left the world before his brief fame reached its height. He was on his way to Italy, consumptive, when he died, in September, 1827.

In the days of the first French Revolution, when the excitement of the occasion brought out all existing enthusiasms in one form or another, many women found a voice, and listeners to their voice, who would have been little attended to at other times. Among these was Helen Maria Williams, a lady who had previously published some poems of small account, but whose political writings, animated by a sincere enthusiasm, were eagerly received both in England and in France. She was an ardent Republican; and she was feared and hated accordingly by one party, and extolled by another. She was a woman of good intentions, warm benevolence, and considerable powers; but, that there was a want of balance or sagacity in her mind seems to be shown by the fact that she died a champion of the Bourbons and their rule. Her most celebrated works were her "Farewell to England," "Sketch of the Politics of France," and "State of Manners and Opinions in the French Republic." She died at Paris, before the breaking out of the second revolution,

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LADY ELEANOR
BUTLER.

which would have perplexed and alarmed her extremely. Her death took place in December, 1827.

There is something interesting, and perhaps profitable, in noting cases of individuality of character, which make themselves felt and heard of amidst the organic movement of a highly civilised society; and we may therefore note the death of a lady whose story is still told by many firesides, where a grey-headed elder sits in the seat of honour. There were two high-born young ladies, of the families of the Marquess of Ormond and Lord Besborough, who, before the breaking out of the first French Revolution, distressed their relations by an early disgust of the world, and longing for absolute seclusion. They left their homes together in 1779, and settled in retirement: but their families brought them back, and endeavoured to separate them, that they might not encourage one another's "romance." The consequence was that they eloped; and it was some time before they could be traced. They settled near Llangollen in Wales, where, for some years, the country people knew them only by the name of "the ladies of the vale." Their friends hoped and believed that they would grow tired of their scheme; but they did not. They had refused marriage; and friendship, and the tranquillity of a country life, appeared to satisfy them to the end. It is true, those who visited them during the latter years of their lives were struck by their inquisitiveness about the affairs of the world, and especially about the gossip of high life in London. A singular sight it was, we are told—the reception of a visitor by these ancient ladies, in their riding-habits, with their rolled and powdered hair, their beaver hats, and their notions and manners of the last century, perfectly unchanged. Amidst the storms of revolutions, when the world was gathered into masses to contend for great questions, this quiet side-scene of romance and individuality is worth glancing at for a moment. Lady Eleanor Butler died in her Llangollen cottage on the 2nd of June, 1829. She must have been about 70 years of age. Her companion followed in a few months.

WOLLASTON.

It seems as if the world were destined to be stripped of its most eminent men of science during the period under review. Laplace and Volta died on the same day, March 5th, 1827—the one in France, and the other in Italy; and soon afterwards, three deaths took place in England within six months, which made scientific foreigners inquire of travellers, "Whom have you left?"—On the 22nd of December, 1828, died Dr. Wollaston, the most illustrious member of a family distinguished for science through three generations. The father and two uncles of William Hyde Wollaston were all Fellows of the Royal Society. He, in whose fame the distinction of his family is now concentrated, was born on the 6th of August, 1766. His profession was that of a physician; but he left it early in a fit of wrath at not being elected to a desired office in St. George's Hospital. He never repented of his hasty determination; and from his devotion to science he reaped all kinds of rewards. He was eminently useful to his race; he was happily occupied; he was highly honoured; and he was very rich. One of his discoveries—that of a method by which platinum can be made ductile and malleable—brought him in £30,000; £10,000 of which he gave away at a stroke to a relation who was in embarrassed circumstances.—Dr. Wollaston's organization was in favour of

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his accomplishing with certainty and completeness whatever he undertook. His bodily senses were particularly acute and delicate; his understanding clear and patient; and his habits of thought and language eminently correct. From his singular accuracy of observation and reflection, he was able to pursue a method of research which would have been impossible to another kind of man. He was able to diminish and simplify the material and apparatus of his experiments in chemistry and natural philosophy to a degree which appeared incredible to those who first heard of his methods. He could carry on a process in a thimble which the world would wonder at: and he would draw out from that little galvanic battery, a wire too slender to be seen but in a full light. With an apparatus which would stand on a tea-tray he would effect what another man would require a roomful of utensils to do. A grain of any substance would serve his purposes of analysis as well as another man's pound. This peculiarity, though chiefly interesting as characteristic of the man, is useful also, as suggesting to other labourers the practicability and benefit of simplifying the process of chemical research. To a certain extent, his example may be imitable, though no one else is likely to arise gifted with his delicacy of sense, acuteness of sagacity, and precision of understanding, which made small amounts of evidence as good as large, if only they were indisputable. As for the immediate practical results of his labours—we have mentioned one whose profit to himself showed its immediate utility. He discovered two new metals, rhodium and palladium. Then we owe to him the Camera Lucida: and that boon to practical chemists, the sliding scale of chemical equivalents: and that great help to crystallographers, the goniometer, or angle measurer; by which the angle contained between two faces of a crystal can be measured with a degree of accuracy never before attainable. But it is an injury to great chemical discoverers to specify as the result of their labours those discoveries which take the form of inventions. We are thankful to have them; but they are a small benefit in comparison with the other services of such men. Their true service is in their general furtherance of science; their pioneering in new regions, or opening out new methods of procedure, whose importance cannot be at once communicated to, or appreciated by, the multitude of men. It is a good thing to invent a useful instrument, for the service or safety of society and men: but it is a much greater thing to evolve a new element, to discover a new substance, to exhibit a new combination of matter, and add confirmation to a general law. Wollaston did much in both ways to serve the world. He died of a disease of the brain, which, however, left his mind clear to the last. He employed his latter days in dictating to an amanuensis an account of the results of his labours. When he was speechless and dying, one of his friends observed aloud that he was in a state of unconsciousness: whereupon, he made signs for paper and pencil, wrote down figures, cast them up, and returned the paper: and the sum was right. He was in the 63rd year of his age.

Dr. Thomas Young went next. He was the son of Quaker parents, whom he astonished not a little by his ability to read at two years old. He appears to have been able to learn and to do whatever he chose; and that, with such versatility, he had any soundness of science at all seems surprising. His

DR. YOUNG.

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first passion was for languages, even for the oriental; and to this we owe the vast benefit of an introduction to the interpretation of the hieroglyphics of Egypt. It was Dr. Young who was the first to read the proper names in the hieroglyphic and enchorial inscriptions on the Rosetta stone, by a comparison of them with the third—the Greek inscription; and it was on this hint that Champollion proceeded in his elaborate researches.—It is by this service, and his theory of the Undulatory character of Light, that Young is chiefly known; though there is hardly a department of national science on which he did not cast some wondrous illumination. It is a common mistake of superficial readers to suppose that there must have been three or four Dr. Youngs at work in different regions in the world of science. He was the last Secretary of the Board of Longitude; and then sole conductor of the Nautical Almanac. His writings are too numerous for citation. He was a physician by profession; but the greatest service he rendered in that province was by his testimony to the empirical character of medical treatment, and the absence of all real science in that department of pursuit. He was himself too scientific to be a good practical physician, or to make his patients think him one. Where he saw no guiding principle, he could not pretend to a decision that he did not feel: and he was open in his complaints of the darkness which involves the laws of the human frame. When he said this in his lectures at St. George's Hospital, and avowed that his idea of the advantage of skill in medical practice was the advantage of holding a larger number of tickets in a lottery over a smaller, the students were offended, as this was, as Arago observes, a doctrine which students of medicine do not like to hear. From this cause of unpopularity, and from his instructions being too high and deep for the comprehension of his class, his lectures were not well attended, nor was his practice large, as the least scientific and therefore most confident practitioners must have, with the anxious and trusting sick, the advantage over those who are more aware of consequences while more doubtful about causes, till the laws of the human frame are less obscure than they as yet are. From these disappointments, and other causes of irritation, Dr. Young was not a happy man: and the controversies in which he was engaged are painful records of the aberrations from the serenity of science induced by those self-regards which the love of science should cast out. He was hardly and insultingly treated: but he might not have been so, if his temper had been worthy of his vocation. He and his enemies are gone down to that common resting-place where there is no more strife: and the testimony remains, of which Arago was the utterer, that among philosophers he must always be held to be one of the greatest whom England has produced in modern times.

SIR HUMPHREY
DAVY.

The man who, of this group, presented the most strongly to the popular observation the attributes of genius was Davy. In his case, there was no occasion to offer upon trust assertions of his greatness, or assurances that a future generation would become aware that he was a transcendent man in his way. People all knew it during his life, whether they understood anything of his services to science or not. His ardour, his eloquence, his poetical faculty, the nature of his intense egotism, his countenance, his manners (before he was spoiled), and his pleasures, all spoke the man of genius, from moment to moment. He brought the poet's mind into philosophical research,

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and the results were as brilliant as might be expected from such a concentration of such faculties as his. The world will for ever be the better for them. Those who know nothing else about him have heard of the Davy lamp, and know what a service he rendered by tracking Death through the foul caverns of the earth to bind and disarm him. This was only one of many immediate practical services which he rendered to society before the eyes of all men—the wise and ignorant together; but the wise know that there is a host more behind which the multitude must as yet take upon trust.—The genius of the Cornish boy made itself felt by society before he had reached mature years; and when he lectured in London at the beginning of the century, he was probably the most popular man of his time—so clear were his expositions, so beautiful his experiments, and so bewitching his ardent eloquence. When we call him perhaps the most popular man of his time, we mean with the listening public; for he was not popular in private life. Besides the degree of wildness which appears in all the evidence of his life and writings, there was an excessive egotism, a lack of magnanimity, an insufferable pride and vanity united, which destroyed all pleasure on both sides in his intercourses with others than his flatterers. His visit to Paris ended badly, hearty as was the welcome accorded to himself and his discoveries by the French philosophers. The serenity of a life of scientific research was not his. He had manifold and intense enjoyments; but not the peace which occupies the unsophisticated mind when employed in its noble researches into the secrets of nature. His ambition did not take the direction of wealth. About money, he was simple-minded and generous. As for the rest, such men are so rare that they may well be permitted the isolation of egotism when they must have so much isolation of other kinds. It is happy for themselves, and for those about them, if they can preserve the childlike nature, innocent, humble, and loving, which bears the truest affinity to genius: but if the world comes in to strip genius of its natural graces, we must not reckon too hardly with a being so singularly circumstanced, but honour and glory in the gifts that remain, and let the losses go.—Davy was born at Penzance, in December, 1778. He arrived in London in 1801; was knighted in 1812; and was afterwards, in 1818, made a baronet; but, his marriage being childless, his title died with him. He became President of the Royal Society in 1820; went abroad in ill health in 1825, and again, and finally, in the early part of 1828, dying at Geneva on the 29th of May, 1829. The authorities of Geneva decreed a public funeral; and there was wide-spread mourning in England when the news arrived that her great philosopher had sunk into the grave at the age of 51.—Davy and Wollaston never crossed each other's path, the character of their minds and their methods of pursuing science being essentially unlike. Wollaston was the elder by twelve years; and on some occasions he was called the Mentor of the younger and more brilliant genius: but they generally worked apart, and certainly without mutual hindrance, if without co-operation. While Wollaston was busy with his thimble, and a shaving of metal, and a pinch of earth, using the most delicate manipulation, and refined observation, Davy was rushing about in his laboratory, among heaps of apparatus and masses of material, holding to his work for days and nights together, or half-killing himself by respiring fatal gases. Wollaston never declared a fact or a

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doctrine, even to his own mind, till the verification of every step of the evidence was complete: while Davy intrepidly published the proofs of the error of his own former published opinions. Wollaston was seldom or never wrong: Davy was often miraculously right. Both had sagacity not to be surpassed: but the sagacity of the one was clear insight, and of the other excited prevision. Both men were too great to be confined within the limits of their own science. Wollaston was a man of various reading and open intellect; and he was capable of genuine intercourse with minds of various character. Davy had not that liberality; but his own pursuits were diversified. He loved sport—fishing and fowling—with all the intensity of his nature. He was fond of what he thought to be mental and moral philosophy, and attached an unaccountable value to his writings on such subjects. That estimate, however, must be regarded as one of his wildnesses, and as another instance of that opposition which is so common between great men and everybody else as to what they can do best and worst. The inspiration of Davy's genius could not but leave some traces in his miscellaneous writings, and we find accordingly a passage of beauty here and there; but if there is philosophy in them, it is such as may be dropped through the dreams of the night. Amidst his mass of achievements, we may well throw out without slight what there was of mistake and transient: but Wollaston left as little as it is possible for fallible and tentative man to leave for rejection, and much, very much, for which the world will ever be the better. They were two wonderful and truly great men; and at the date under our notice, and for long after, the scientific world felt blank and dreary without them.

MAJOR RENNELL.

Major Rennell is considered the first Englishman who ever attained a high and permanent reputation as a geographer. He began life in the navy, and early showed what he was capable of in surveying. After being in India, he was induced to leave the navy for the army; and he went out to Bengal as an officer of engineers. His Bengal atlas, and some charts of great value, appeared before long. His greatest work is "The Geographical System of Herodotus;" a work of the highest interest and importance to untravelled scholars, and a marvel in its way, from the fact that Major Rennell could not read Greek—had no better translation of Herodotus than Beloe's, and was actually able to detect the errors of the translation, by his sagacity and his geographical knowledge together. He assisted Dr. Vincent in making out the track of Nearchus for his Commentary on Arrian's account of that voyage: he assisted Sir William Jones in his Oriental Collections; and it was he who made out Mungo Park's track, from his journals and descriptions; and, by comparing Park's account with prior discoveries, formed the map which accompanies the Travels with an approach to correctness since proved to be truly surprising. One of his most remarkable and interesting works is his "Observations on the Topography of the Plain of Troy," which the lovers of Homer rushed to read, and have studied ever since. As a practical boon, none of his labours are more important than his account of the currents in the oceans navigated by European ships. This excellent man and eminent public benefactor lived to the age of 88, being born near Chudleigh, in Devonshire, in 1742, and dying on the 29th of March, 1830. Though he never reached a higher rank than that of Major in the army, and Surveyor-General of Bengal, he had

abundance of honours in the scientific world, being a member of the chief learned societies in Europe. His must have been an eminently happy life—full of diversity and interest, full of innocence and uprightness, and of achievements of the most unquestionable value to the whole society of the civilized world.

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Among the philanthropists whose lives and labours closed during this period, PESTALOZZI. the name of Pestalozzi ought not to be omitted; for, though a foreigner, he was a benefactor to our country and people. One of the most remarkable results of the Peace, was the improvement in methods of education in countries which had for many years been shut up within themselves, but could now freely communicate with each other. Pestalozzi was the principal medium of this benefit to England. He was a Swiss, born at Zurich, in 1746; and his benevolence led him to surrender all the ordinary views of young men entering upon the profession of the law, and to devote himself to the service of the ignorant and poor. As director of an orphan institution at Stanz, he obtained experience, and the opportunity of testing the value of some of his ideas on the training of the human mind. Here he was seen at work by various English travellers, or his pupils were encountered here and there, and his popular works were made known among us; and the rage for the Pestalozzian method of education which ensued can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. This Pestalozzian method was in fact the Socratic, but applied to little children, with whom Socrates himself would probably not have used it. Hitherto, commonplace and unreflecting parents and teachers had gone on in the old method—putting everything into a child, and not thinking of bringing anything out; while reflecting and able teachers had of course done both. Now, everything was to be done by the interrogative method, and nothing was to be received by the memory which could in any way be made otherwise accessible. The suffering of a multitude of children was at first very great, as under every new fashion in education; and there are many who rue the prevalence of that fashion to this day. But this was no fault of Pestalozzi's. It was not his way to tease a little child with questions that it could not see the drift of, till every fibre in its frame was quivering with irritation. It was not his way to work a child's reasoning faculties before they ought to have been appealed to at all; or to forbid the natural and pleasant exercise of the flourishing memory of childhood till a little creature might be seen clutching a vocabulary or chronological table, as most children lay hands on a fairy tale. He interrogated his pupils only on subjects which they were able and ready to understand, and on which they had ideas which they could produce on easy solicitation. But the truth was, his procedure was more a peculiar talent than a system, and it was impossible that it could be extensively imitated without serious abuse, for which he was, all the while, in no way responsible. Serious as were the abuses at first in England, as no doubt elsewhere, the benefits given us by Pestalozzi unquestionably and immeasurably surpassed them. The mischief was one which was certain to work its own cure; while all that was noble and true must live and grow. Pestalozzi's respect for the human mind, wherever he found it, his sense of its equal and infinite rights, under all circumstances, his recognition of the diversity of its faculties, his skill in enlarging its scope and substantiating its knowledge—all this was like a new idea to a nation of parents who

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had been too long shut up alone with old methods, and debarred from intercourse with thinkers abroad. Since that time, English children have had a better chance in education (those of them who are educated at all)—a better chance of a natural and timely development of their various faculties, physical, intellectual, and moral. Therefore it is that we may fairly class Pestalozzi among our national benefactors, and record his death among the national losses. He died at the age of 82, on the 17th of February, 1827.

DR. WATSON.

Another educator died during this period, whose name should not be ungratefully passed over—Dr. Watson, of the Deaf and Dumb Institution in the Kent Road, London. Without going into any general account of the education of the deaf and dumb, we may note, in explanation of Dr. Watson's services, that the most fatal oversight in that branch of education has been that of supposing that a full communication of mind and reception of ideas can be obtained by written language and gesture. Written words and gesture are but the signs of language, after all; and without oral communication, the mind cannot possibly be fully exercised and cultivated. This difficulty is, to all appearance, insuperable: but men have risen up, from time to time, who saw that though the deaf and dumb can never be brought to an equality of cultivation with those who have the full use of speech, much is gained by giving them spoken as well as written language; and Dr. Watson was the man who gave the deaf and dumb more power in this direction than any preceding teacher. Bulwer, the chirographist, opened up the track in England in the seventeenth century; and his work, dated 1648, plainly shows that he taught articulate speech, as well as the written and hand language. Wallis followed, being a contemporary of Bulwer, and anxious to engross the merit which belonged truly to him. Dr. Wallis had great merit; but he is proved not to have been a discoverer. Articulate speech had been found attainable for the born deaf previously in Spain, and subsequently in Holland, where Dr. Amman published his method in full; and during the eighteenth century, Germany and France followed. Henry Baker taught various deaf and dumb persons to speak; but he bound them over not to reveal his method; and, though he half-promised Dr. Johnson to make it known, he never did so. Thomas Braidwood began his career in 1760, at Edinburgh, and carried to some extent the practice of articulate speech among his pupils. When he removed to London, in 1783, Dr. Watson studied and worked at his institution, and made up his mind to devote himself to the education of that unfortunate class, of whom there are not fewer than 13,000 in our islands; and in his eyes the practice of articulate speech was indispensable to the attainment of such cultivation as could be afforded. For five-and-forty years he laboured at his benevolent task, and he carried the capability of speech much higher than any predecessor. In regard to the general run of his pupils, an authority declares, "Some of the pupils articulate not unpleasantly: their reading is monotonous, but their animation in ordinary conversations, especially on subjects of interest to them, gives a species of natural tone and emphasis to what they say." This, great as it is, is not all. A few days before Dr. Watson's death, one of his private pupils was called to the bar by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. Here were tidings for a good man to receive on his death-bed! The days of miracles will never be over while human

benevolence is unexhausted : and here we have, for a sign of our own times, a good man soothed to his rest by the blessings of the dumb. Dr. Watson died on the 23rd of November, 1829, in the 65th year of his age.

1830.


It is not a purely melancholy task to make up this account of our national losses. In the presence of great deeds, the doers fade into shadows even during their life, except to the few to whom they are dear for other reasons *than* their deeds. The shadowy form is dissolved by death, and we strain our eyes to catch the last trace, and sigh when it is gone : but the substance remains in the deeds done, and yet more in the immortal ideal of the man.

END OF VOLUME I.







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